



## Weed Management Information

### Nodding thistle

**Botanical name:** *Carduus nutans*

**Weed Class:** Class 4 noxious weed

**Legal requirements:** The growth of the plant must be managed in a manner that reduces its numbers, spread and incidence and continuously inhibits its reproduction.

#### Control options

**Manual control:** Seedlings and individual plants can often be pulled up by hand. Manual hoeing or slashing should occur before flower formation. Plants with seed heads should be collected and burnt.

**Cultivation:** Repeated cultivation of seedlings following each germination is effective on arable land. Mechanical slashing should be undertaken before the seed heads have formed. Plants with seed heads should be collected and burnt.

**Biological control:** There have been three biological control agents released in Australia. The first, thistle-head weevil *Rhinocyllus conicus*, has now spread on its own to most nodding thistle infestations. The seed fly, *Urophora solstitialis*, was the second agent released in Australia. The rosette weevil *Trichosiromus horridus*, this winter-active weevil, which produces many hundreds of eggs per female, has great potential as a control agent of nodding thistle. Field trials to date have shown a reduction of 50% in rosette diameter and 80% reduction in seed set.

**Chemical control:** Use a herbicide that is registered for use on nodding thistle in NSW and in a manner and rate stated on the label (or a current pesticide order). Seek advice from a Council Vegetation Officer or your herbicide supplier. Please ensure the chosen product is suitable for the designated land use and situation. Please observe all environmental and safety cautions that are stated on the label.

#### Description

Erect, mostly biennial, thistle with flowering stems to 1.7 m high. Seeds ovoid, grey to brown, slightly curved, longitudinally lined.

**Stems:** Distinguished by spiny winged stems (except just below flower heads)

**Leaves:** Variable, basal leaves in a rosette, green and often with white mid veins, to 50 cm long, to 10 cm wide,

**Flowers:** In solitary heads at ends of branches; heads made up of many small flowers (florets) to 24 mm long. Flowers mostly spring to autumn. Pink to bright arising from a hairy receptacle;

**Dispersal:** Reproduces by a seed furnished with a pappus or 'parachute' of hairs which is capable of carrying the seed over long distances. Most seed is distributed by soil movement on farm machinery and vehicles, livestock and water movement.

**Habitat:** Disturbed sites, pasture, woodland. Uncommon in the Shire, more common on the tablelands



**Nodding thistle rosette**

Photo: JM Iles and M Campbell



**Mature nodding thistle**

Photo: JM Iles and M Campbell

**For further information:** Councils Vegetation Officers Ph: (02) 6499 2222

**Helpful websites** [www.southeastweeds.org.au](http://www.southeastweeds.org.au)  
[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds)

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