

WATER - our MOUNTAIN GOLD

Information from the
Central Sierra Watershed Committee

Yellow Starthistle *An invasive, noxious weed*



Treat it early and protect your property!

Yellow Starthistle can be identified by a yellow straw-like flower head surrounded by inch long spikes.

PROBLEM

- Yellow starthistle is a noxious weed (a non-native pest plant that threatens ecological and economic systems) that can rapidly spread across your property and make it unusable.
- In 2 to 3 years it can force out all other vegetation, reducing the quantity of forage available for livestock and wildlife.
- It is poisonous to horses if eaten in large quantities and can cause chewing disease, a fatal nervous disease.
- Its spines are painful to humans and animals.
- A large mature plant can disperse tens of thousands of seeds.
- Some property values in the northwest have decreased due to this weed.

PREVENTION

Yellow starthistle is spread by seeds in the soil (on vehicle tires, heavy equipment, shoes and boots), livestock, wildlife, recreationists, water, and air.

What can you do to help prevent spread?

- ✓ Wash down vehicles and equipment to avoid transporting contaminated soil
- ✓ Learn to recognize yellow starthistle - eradication of small new infestations saves time and money.

TREATMENT

The Sierra-San Joaquin Noxious Weed Alliance (<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/wma>) is a cooperative effort that is underway to control yellow starthistle in Madera, Mariposa, and Fresno counties. It includes Fresno, Madera and Mariposa Counties, the local Resource Conservation Districts, California Department of Food and Agriculture, Yosemite National Park, United States Forest Service, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The goal is to eradicate this weed on public right-of-ways, private property, and public land.

Every property owner needs to be involved in this campaign to rid yellow starthistle from our land.

- Hand pulling plants is the best method when a few new plants are found. If they are flowering, bag the plants and place in garbage.
- Mowing and weed whacking are also effective and inexpensive methods for larger infestations **but timing is very important; if it is done too early or too late, starthistle will just get worse!** The best time is when about 2-5% of the flower heads appear yellow.
- Ranchers can control yellow starthistle with carefully timed grazing by cattle, goats, or sheep (not horses!). For details see <http://wric.ucdavis.edu/yst/manage/management3.html> or call your University of California Cooperative Extension advisor at 559.675.7879 ext. 207.
- Sometimes it is necessary to use a herbicide, applied during the early stages of growth. A permit to use these chemicals may be required through the County Agriculture Commissioner: Madera County

559.675.7876 or Mariposa County 209.966.2075. Information on which herbicides to use is summarized at the following web location: <http://wric.ucdavis.edu/yst/manage/management15.html#table>

MORE INFORMATION: Joanna Clines, US Forest Service 559.877.2218 ext. 3150 or jclines@fs.fed.us or on the web site <http://wric.ucdavis.edu/yst/yst.html>

The Central Sierra Watershed Committee and State Water Resources Control Board have provided this information through a Proposition 204/Phase II grant. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views of the State.

The CSWC meets on the last Wednesday of every month at the Sierra Ambulance Office, 40755 Winding Way, Oakhurst, at 9 AM, and is open to the public. For information, please email leavesofgrass@netptc.net

The mission of the Central Sierra Watershed Committee is to promote the quality, quantity, and aesthetic values of our water resources through the conservation and restoration of our watersheds.

CSWC members include: Interested citizens, ranchers, homeowners; local Native American tribes; North Fork Community Development Council; Chowchilla-Redtop and Coarsegold Resource Conservation Districts; Chowchilla City Council; Upper Merced River Watershed Council; California Water Institute; Sierra Foothill Conservancy; Madera Irrigation District; Yosemite Sequoia Resource Conservation & Development Council; US Army Corps of Engineers; Regional Water Quality Control Board; Madera County Environmental Health & Engineering; CA Department of Water Resources; Madera County Board of Supervisors; Madera Agriculture Commissioner; San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District; Natural Resource Conservation Service; and the United States Forest Service.