

# NODDING THISTLE

## Tier 2



### **Overview**

The invasive nature of this aggressive plant can lead to severe degradation of native grasslands and meadows because grazing animals focus on native vegetation giving thistles a competitive advantage.

### **Habitat**

It prefers disturbed areas but is still able to invade healthy plant communities. Nodding Thistle can form tall, impenetrable thickets. It is not tolerant of excessively wet, dry or shady conditions.

### **Identification**

**Stems:** Erect, unbranched, up to 2.5m tall, and have spiny wings along the stem except just below the flowering head.

**Leaves:** Alternate, glabrous, and veined on the underside. Leaf margins are deeply lobed and spiny.

**Flowers:** Red to purple in colour and occur at the ends of branches and axils of upper leaves.

**Seeds:** The seeds are 4 mm long x 1.5 mm wide, light brown with dark stripes, glossy, and topped by a long pappus.

