Cirsium arvense

Common name:
Californian thistle, Perennial thistle,
Creeping thistle,

Palatability to Livestock:
Moderate when young, and at flowering.

Toxicity to Goats:
Low risk toxicity.

Toxicity to Other Species:
Potentially toxic to sheep and cattle.

Poisonous Principle:
Nitrates.

Effects:
Signs and Symptoms;
. Respiratory distress.
. Associated darkening of the gums.

Health and Production Problems;
. Rapid death, or sometimes recovery.

Treatment;
See Vet.

Integrated Control Strategy:
. Use goats to eat the plants when young, and to prevent flowering.
. Try herbicides. Try Amicide® or Roundup®. This is a declared "Noxious Weed" in Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia.

Comments:
. These weeds may occasionally cause problems to hungry stock that are not used to eating them, but are generally eaten without any ill effects.
. An erect perennial forb, growing well over a metre high, with a creeping rootstock.

. Green leaves are woolly white underneath, and spiny on the margins.
. Flowers are reddish or grayish purple. Male and female flowers grow on different plants.
. A weed of pastures, crops and cereals.
. Spines may cause damage to stock and dogs.
. Reproduces by wind dispursed seed and a root system which spreads over several metres.
. Produces allelopathic compounds affecting pastures and crops.
. Also harbours insects which attack crops, and is an alternate host for some plant pathogens.
. Honey bees are attracted to the flowers.
. Used in herbal remedies.

Picture: *Cirsium arvense* Monsanto, Roundup.

Further Reading:
. Agdex 647. NSW Dept Ag.
. Landcare Note. Victoria.
. Holm, Plucknett, Pancho, Herberger.
 Worlds Worst Weeds. 1977
. Parsons and Cuthbertson.
 Noxious Weeds of Australia. 2001
. Simmonds, Holst and Bourke. Palatability and Potential
 Toxicity of Australian Weeds to Goats. 2000