**Carduus nutans**

**Common name:**
Nodding thistle, Musk thistle,

**Palatability to Livestock:**
Moderate.

**Toxicity to Goats:**
Low risk.

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

**Poisonous Principle:**
Nitrates.

**Effects:**
*Signs and Symptoms:*
. Nitrate poisoning causes respiratory distress and darkening of the gums.

*Health and Production Problems:*
. Affected animals may be just found dead, or die very quickly. Some may recover.
. A vegetable fault in fleece.

*Treatment:*
Be aware of potential stock problems.

**Integrated Control Strategy:**
. Goats eat the flower buds and young growth, and prevent seeding.
. Use “Group I” herbicides at the rosette stage, and again later. Do not slash as the weed will flower at low growth levels. Grub out.
. Biological control agents are being tested.
. This is a “Declared Weed” in parts of NSW, Victoria, and Western Australia.

**Comments:**
. Nitrate accumulating plants are frequently grazed without any adverse effects, providing stock are allowed to adapt to them slowly.
. An erect annual or biennial forb, growing to about a metre tall.

. The upper half has many branches, if the crown is damaged, multiple stems are produced.
. The rosette has whitish mid-veins, the leaves are deeply lobed and end in a spine.
. The flowers are single and form at the end of the branch, and droop. They can be white, pink, red or purple.
. Establishes well on bare ground, and competes with pasture.
. May have allelopathic properties, which inhibit pasture species.

![Picture: Carduus nutans Noxious Weed Control.](image)

**Further Reading:**
. Landcare Note. DPI. Victoria.

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