

Carduus pycnocephalus

Common name:

Slender / Shore / Italian Thistle

Palatability to Livestock:

Moderate, flowers and new growth.

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.

Treatment;

Be aware of potential stock problems.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . Goats eat the flower buds and prevent seeding.
- . Soft new growth is palatable. Hoe out.
- . Wick wipe or spot spray with "Group I" herbicide.
- . Biological control agents are being tested.
- . This is a declared "Noxious Weed" in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania.

Comments:

- . An erect annual or biennial rosette forming weed, with a strong taproot, spiny green leaves, erect stems, and bracts.
- . The rosette has distinct white patches along the veins.
- . The leaf margins have grey-white spines.

. Flower heads are pink to purple, on short stems, in groups of two or three, surrounded by spiny bracts.

. A weed of roadsides and pastures, spread by seed; often on river banks.

. Plant is not often eaten by stock.

. See "Plants of Western NSW". This plant is often confused with *C. tenuiflorus*.



Picture: *Carduus pycnocephalus* Wikipedia.

Further Reading:

- . Weeds. Auld and Medd. 1992.
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- . Simmonds, Holst and Bourke. Palatability and Potential Toxicity of Aust. Weeds to Goats. 2000
- . Swarbrick and Skarratt. Bushweed 2 Database. 1997