**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 dispersed 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

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