



## Weed of the Month: Centaurea solstitialis

Welcome to our "Weed of the Month" feature, designed to raise awareness about the impact of noxious invasive weeds on our environment. This month, we're focusing on Yellow Starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), an aggressive plant species that poses a significant threat to native ecosystems and agricultural lands.

### Identification:

Yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) is an annual or biennial growing 18 to 36 inches tall. Plants have deep taproots, winged stems and are covered in thin white, woolly hairs. Flowerheads with a wide base and composed of yellow flowers. Bracts at the base of flowerheads with spine tips of varying lengths. Larger spines on bract tips are 3/8 to 3/4 inch long, yellowish in color and are star-like in arrangement.



Left- Yellow starthistle plant

Right - Flowering yellow starthistle

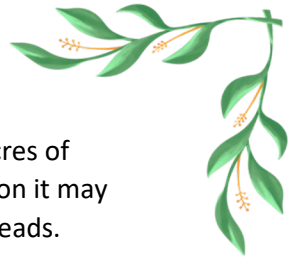


### Invasive Behavior:

Yellow starthistle is found in rangeland, edges of cropland, abandoned farmlands and pastures as well as along roadsides, railways and recreational areas. Its rapid growth rate and aggressive resource acquisition make it competitive in a native plant communities where it forms dense stands displacing native species and reducing diversity.



Left- Yellow starthistle at bolt stage



**Impact:**

It is an aggressive species that has invaded millions of acres of rangelands in the western United States. Cattle feeding on it may be poorly nourished and can be damaged by the spiny heads. Horses may be poisoned and develop chewing disease.

Left- Yellow starthistle rosette stage  
Right - Yellow starthistle plant



**Control and Management:**

Good pasture management can help prevent infestations. Plants need to be managed to prevent further seed production, to deplete the seedbank and to promote desirable plants species in place of the yellow starthistle. Mechanical removal is not economical for large infestations. Small infestations may be hand-pulled or mowed. Areas should be controlled frequently during the growing season.

**Prevention:**

Preventing the spread of Starthistle is key to its management. Be vigilant for any signs of this weed in your area and implement integrative management practices when found.

By staying informed and taking proactive measures, we can work together to curb the spread of Starthistle and protect our native ecosystems. Join us next month for a new "Weed of the Month" feature, where we'll highlight another noxious invasive plant and share tips on how to address it.

For more information about Starthistle, feel free to visit the California Invasive Plant Council website at:

<https://www.cal-ipc.org/plants/profile/centaurea-solstitialis-profile/>

For more information about our other county programs, visit our website at:

<https://www.suttercounty.org/government/county-departments/agricultural-department>

Thank you for your dedication to preserving our environment and agricultural land!

