

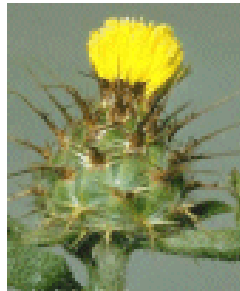
Know Your Weeds!!

Malta Starthistle *Centaurea melitensis*

Asteraceae (Sunflower Family)

Characteristics

- ◆ Annual
- ◆ Largest stems 3 mm wide. Foliage blue-green.
- ◆ Leaves evenly covered with fine hairs and minute resinous dots.
- ◆ Basal, rosette leaves entire to deeply lobed to midrib. Lobes rounded. Surfaces evenly covered with stiff thick hairs and resinous dots. Fine cottony hairs sparse on older leaves, dense on new leaves.
- ◆ Plant grows to about 1 to 3 feet tall.
- ◆ Flower bracts have a stiff, sharp 0.75 inch thorn surrounding yellow flower head.
- ◆ Flowers April-September. Thistle-like flower about 3/8" wide. Typically 10-12 mm long, singly or in groups of 2 to 3.
- ◆ Flower bracts 8-15 mm long. Main spine 5-12 mm long, slender, typically purple to brown tinged. Lateral spines usually 3-4 pairs, with an upper pair on the central spine.
- ◆ Seed production is highly variable. Plants can produce 1-60 or more seeds per head and 1-100 heads or more per plant .
- ◆ Taproots do not penetrate the soil as deeply as those of Yellow Starthistle.
- ◆ Seeds, 2-3 mm long, fuzzy, grayish to tan. Bases deeply notched, narrow, hook-like. Pappus bristles pale tan, 1-3 mm long.
- ◆ Young seedlings are especially resistant to the effects of fall drought.



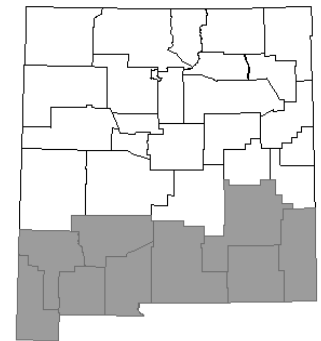
Origin

Malta Starthistle was introduced during the 1700's from Southern Europe.

Distribution

Commonly found in southern counties of the state.

*** Unlike Yellow Starthistle, Malta Starthistle is not known to cause chewing disease in horses and is used medicinally in Spain.**



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