



HUME CITY COUNCIL

# Artichoke Thistle

Weed Management Guidelines

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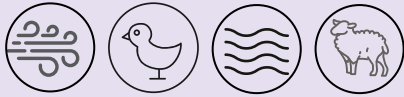




## HUME CITY COUNCIL WEEDS of Hume

### Artichoke Thistle

*Cynara cardunculus*



#### Method of reproduction and dispersal

Most plant seeds fall only a few meters from the parent plant, and are typically carried by the wind. Some seeds, though, can spread up to 20 meters from the plant. Moreover, animals, birds, and floods can disperse seeds. Careless disposal of cut flowers and fragments of roots can also lead to the germination of new plants in favourable conditions. Moving soil may facilitate the spread of this plant.

#### Quick facts

- Seeds are generally dispersed by wind, with most seeds only dropping a few meters from the parent plant. However, some seeds can travel far from the parent plant. Seeds can also be spread by livestock, birds and flowing
- Seed can survive up to five years in the soil.
- Plants should be physically removed or sprayed with herbicide before seed set.

#### Identification

*Cynara cardunculus*, more familiarly known as the Artichoke thistle, originates from the Mediterranean. This striking, spiny, herbaceous perennial has greyish green leaves and bright blue to purple-hued flowers make it easy to spot. It also grows up to two metres tall.

#### Stems

Stems are gray-green in color. Branches grow toward the top of the plant stems, which are ribbed and covered with cottony down. There is usually just one stem produced by each crown, but occasionally eight stems appear.

#### Leaves

The upper surface of the leaf is greyish green, while the underside is covered in dense white hairs.

In the center of the artichoke thistle is a small stalk about 15cm in length with a basal rosette of leaves spreading horizontally to around 1m long and 30cm wide.

#### Flowers

Blue to purple flowers with globular heads measuring 7 to 13 cm in diameter. These are surrounded by a series of stout bracts, each ending in a spiny tip.

#### Seeds

To aid dispersal, they are equipped with feathery hairs up to 4 cm long that act as a parachute.

#### Roots

Large fleshy tap root to 200mm long.



## Prevention

Removing and bagging the seed heads to limit the spread of seed.

## Manual Removal

Manual removal can be achieved on small infestations but most (if not all) of the tap root has to be removed; otherwise the plant will regrow.

## Chemical

Spot or boom spraying is only effective during autumn and winter and usually has to be undertaken twice. Use chemicals that are registered for Artichoke Thistle and use according to the label. This could include a broadleaf selective herbicide.

Targeting at rosette stage reduces costs, amounts of herbicide used and chemical drift.

## Long Term Control

Ensure you have a good coverage of perennial species (crops, perennial pasture or native vegetation), limit soil disturbances and monitor for new outbreaks. Remove as soon as identified by chipping or spraying.

## Pasture management

Sowing and maintaining healthy pasture can limit seedling growth, as artichoke thistle seedlings do not grow well when shaded.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Flowering	•	•	•									
Seeding		•	•	•								
Germination				•	•	•						
Treatment		•	•	•	•	•	•					



## Enviromental and Agriculture Impacts

Artichoke thistle displaces and impacts on native grasslands by competing with dioresible native species.

Some small birds feed on the seeds of the artichoke thistle and are responsible for increasing the spread along plantations, watercourses and fence lines.

Artichoke thistle has its greatest impact on agricultural land. Once established, the weed shades out most pasture species as well as drawing moisture and nutrients from the soil.

The spiny nature of the plant deters sheep and cattle from grazing near heavy infestations. However, the plant will be eaten by livestock if no other food is available.

## Quick Facts

- Releases chemicals into the soil that inhibit their growth.
- spines can restrict movement of wildlife and livestock.
- Touching artichoke thistles can irritate and inflame the skin in some people
- Successful weed control relies on follow up after the initial efforts. This means looking for and killing regrowth or new seedlings

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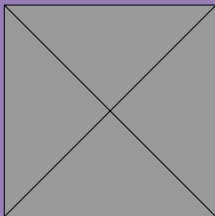
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