

PLANT PEST CONTROL

LAND PLANT PESTS

Saffron Thistle: *Carthamus lanatus*

Why are we worried?

This annual thistle grows to about 1m tall. Infestations can form into impenetrable stands. The plant is woody when mature and is very spiky. The dry sharp spikes get into wool and can cause injury when shearing or handling sheep.

Saffron thistle has the potential to become a serious thistle to control and if found immediate attention should be given.

What does it look like?

The flowers are a distinct yellow. Seeds are large with little down and are not windborne but drop close to the parent plant. They can be carried by stock, water, vehicles, or in dirt. The leaves are hard with sharp spikes.

Where is it found?

Plants can be found in dry areas of pasture, on flats and hillsides. Infestations have been found in the past near where there is or has been an old fowl house. Infestations have also been found away from these situations in paddocks which indicate seed has been carried by some unknown source. It is thought saffron thistle was introduced as a contaminant in wheat imported from Australia.

What is the best way to control the plant?

Young plants at the rosette stage can be sprayed with MCPA or 2,4-D, generally in spring, but as plants become mature and woody they need to be grubbed out or mown before seed becomes viable.

For further information

If you think you may have this plant pest on your property, please contact the Biosecurity Plant Pest Officers at Hawke's Bay Regional Council for advice and we will work with you to eradicate it.

Wairoa	0-6-838 8527
Napier	0-6-835 9200
Waipukurau	0-6-858 8636
TOLL FREE	0800 108 838



*Flowerhead
and seeds*