



Onopordum acanthium

Asteraceae
Scotch thistle



ONAC

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

growth

Stem have spiny wings usually 2-3 cm wide (up to 5 cm). Stems 0.5-1.5 m tall.

flower

Heads; all disk flowers; spheric to hemispheric, mostly solitary but sometimes in clusters of 2-7. Petals white or purple, hairless, 20-25 mm long. Flowers June-September.

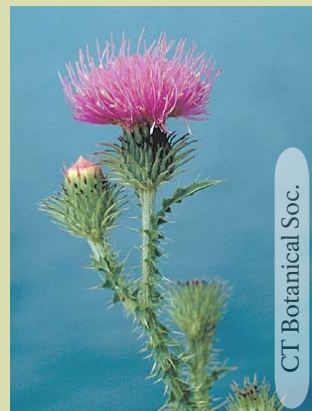
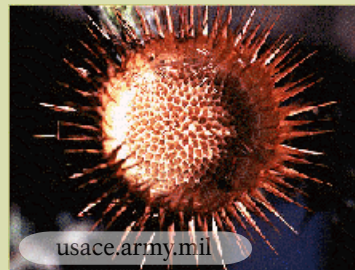
leaves

Alternate, spiny. Broadly oval and irregularly spiny-toothed, 10-50 cm long. Covered with white woolly hairs, with the lower surface more densely covered than the upper. Margins spiny-toothed.

Beneath heads are many spiny-tipped phyllaries (leafy bracts) in many overlapping rows. Phyllary spines less than 5 mm long. Receptacles fleshy, deeply pitted (see photo right). Phyllaries linear to narrowly lance-shaped, covered with short hairs and a few cobwebby hairs.

seeds

Achenes 4-5 mm long, with pink to reddish bristles 7-9 mm long; seeds 4 or 5 angled, mottled brown to blackish, with wavy ridges.



flower color

Elevation:

Above 4500 feet

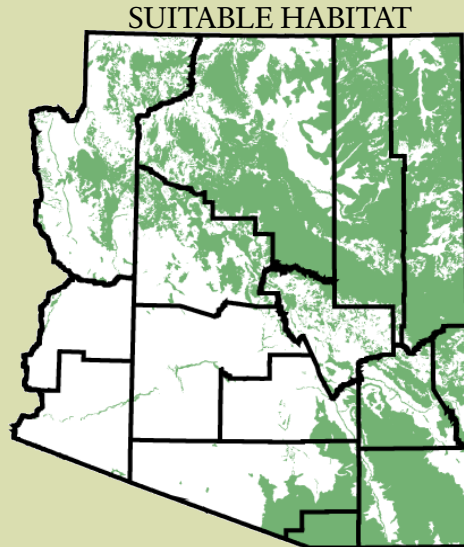
Ecotypes Invaded:

Grasslands, montane wetlands, montane riparian areas, woodlands & montane conifer forests.

ECOLOGY & DISTRIBUTION

Plants typically germinate in fall after the first rains and exist as rosettes throughout the first year until flowering stems develop during the second spring/summer season.

Severe infestations can form tall, dense, impenetrable stands, especially in fertile soils. Stems can persist into the next season with spiny phyllaries and receptacles attached. Occurs in natural areas, disturbed sites, roadsides, fields, and especially sites with fertile soils.



Suitable habitat based on the Arizona Wildlands Invasive Plant Working Group (AZ-WIPWG) assessment. Green = suitable habitat; White = unsuitable habitat; Gray = unknown. Based on Brown, Lowe & Puse (1980) vegetation communities.



Rosettes