

# Yellow Starthistle

... a noxious weed

If this weed is growing  
on your property you  
have a problem



## Yellow Starthistle, a noxious weed

*Treat it early and protect your property.*

*Yellow Starthistle can be identified by a yellow straw-like flower head surrounded by inch long spikes.*

### PROBLEM

- Yellow starthistle is a noxious weed (a non-native pest plant that threatens ecological and economic systems) that can rapidly spread across your property and make it unusable.
- In 2 to 3 years it can force out all other vegetation, reducing the quantity of forage available for livestock and wildlife.
- It is poisonous to horses if eaten in large quantities and can cause chewing disease, a fatal nervous disease. Its spines are painful to both humans and animals.
- A large mature plant can disperse tens of thousands of seeds.
- Some property values in the northwest have decreased due to this weed.

### PREVENTION

Yellow starthistle is spread by soil (on vehicle tires, heavy equipment, shoes and boots), livestock, wildlife, recreationists, water, and air. What can you do to help prevent spread?

- Wash down vehicles and equipment to avoid transporting contaminated soil.
- Learn to recognize yellow starthistle - eradication of small new infestations saves time and money.

### TREATMENT

The Sierra-San Joaquin Noxious Weed Alliance (<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/wma>) is a cooperative effort that is underway to control yellow starthistle in Madera, Mariposa, and Fresno counties. It includes Madera and Mariposa Counties, the Coarsegold, Chowchilla-Redtop, and Mariposa County Resource Conservation Districts; California Department of Food and Agriculture; Yosemite National Park; United States Forest Service; and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The goal is to eradicate this weed on public right-of-ways, private property, and public lands. And... every property owner needs to be involved in this campaign to rid yellow starthistle from our lands.

- Hand pulling plants is the best method when a few new plants are found. If they are flowering, bag the plants and place in garbage.
- Mowing and weed whacking are also effective and inexpensive methods for larger infestations **but timing is very important, if done too early the starthistle will just get worse!** The best time is when about 2-5% of the flower heads appear yellow.
- Ranchers can control yellow starthistle with carefully timed grazing by cattle, goats or sheep (not horses!). For details see "<http://wric.ucdavis.edu/ystr/manage/management3.html>" or call your UC cooperative extension advisor at 559.675.7879 ext.207.
- Sometimes it is necessary to use a herbicide, applied during the early stages of growth. A permit to use these chemicals may be required through the County Agriculture Commissioner: Madera County 559.675.7876 or Mariposa County 209.966.2075. Information on which herbicides to use is summarized at the following web location: <http://wric.ucdavis.edu/ystr/manage/management15.html#table>.

*The Central Sierra Watershed Committee 559.675.7823 and State Water Resources Control Board have provided this information through a Proposition 204/Phase II grant. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views of the State.*

MORE INFORMATION: Joanna Clines, US Forest Service 559.877.2218 ext. 3150 or [jclines@fs.fed.us](mailto:jclines@fs.fed.us) or on the web site <http://wric.ucdavis.edu/ystr/ystr.html>