

“WANTED DEAD NOT ALIVE”

Prickly Lettuce, Milk Thistle

bot. name - *Lactuca serriola*

<https://florabase.dpaw.wa.gov.au/browse/profile/8096>

DESCRIPTION :-

Biennial or a winter or summer annual. Colonises a range of disturbed habitats including wetlands. Exudes a white milky sap when damaged. Most seedlings emerge in autumn, grow slowly and form a rosette over winter, and then develop stems in spring. Long, warm autumns favour emergence and rosette establishment, and often result in large populations the following year. Plants emerging in spring have a shorter rosette phase before flowering and are often smaller than plants emerging in autumn. Seeds have an attached pappus for wind-dispersal, have no primary dormancy and only form a short term soil seedbank. Seed production is proportional to plant height, with taller plants able to produce as many as 2,300 seeds. Research has shown it has broadened its ecological amplitude, enabling it to invade a range of vegetation types.

Many populations in southern Australia have developed resistance to Group 2 herbicides.

MANAGEMENT

Manually remove small and/or isolated infestations, ensuring entire plant is removed especially the taproot. Apply glyphosate at early growth or rosette stages in spring, summer or autumn or metsulfuron methyl 5 g/ha (based on a minimum of 50 L/ha of water) + surfactant. Plants are difficult to control with herbicides once the flowering stems have begun to elongate.

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