



903 N. Black  
Bozeman, MT 59715  
(406) 582-3265

## YELLOW STARHISTLE MANAGEMENT TIPS

Yellow starthistle is an annual with a deep taproot and is a member of the Sunflower family. Straw-colored spines up to 2 inches long surround the base of the yellow flower. Yellow starthistle reproduces only by seed. **Seed longevity is 6 to 10 years.** Mature plants usually grow 2 to 3 feet tall. Yellow starthistle is typically found in rangeland, pastures, agricultural areas, and along rights-of-way. The plant is toxic to horses, causing the neurological disorder “chewing disease” which can be fatal. The sharp spines inhibit recreational activities and can be damaging to the eyes of animals.



**Management and control efforts must be planned for several consecutive growing seasons at the existing site in order to prevent seed formation/dispersal and to monitor for, and appropriately treat, any new plants that emerge.**

**Control measures that have been found to be effective for the management of yellow starthistle include:**

- 1. Mechanical treatment (hand-pulling & digging):** These methods are strongly recommended when there are small infestations, and are most effective from when the plant has bolted up to the early flowering stage. It is critical to pull the plants before they produce viable seed. Remove as much of the root as possible and place flowering plants in bags to prevent seed dispersal. Be sure to wear gloves when hand-pulling or digging plants.
- 2. Herbicide treatment: Be sure to always follow directions on the label. The label is the law!** Be sure your equipment is calibrated so that you can add the proper amount to your tank. The following herbicides are commonly used to control yellow starthistle.

**Mixing rates in small backpack or hand sprayers are as follows:**

Curtail:	1 - 2 oz herbicide to 1 gallon of water.
Milestone:	1/2 – 2/3 teaspoon herbicide to 1 gallon of water
GrazonNext HL:	1 oz herbicide to 1 gallon of water
*Opensight:	1/2 teaspoon herbicide to 1 gallon of water

**Rates in large sprayers are as follows:**

Curtail:	2 quarts herbicide per acre
Milestone:	3 - 5 oz herbicide per acre
GrazonNext HL:	1 quart herbicide per acre
*Opensight:	2 – 2.5 oz herbicide per acre

**NOTE:** Be sure to add a surfactant to your tank mix, which will enhance the performance of your herbicide and is required for certain herbicides (read the label). (0.5 - 1 oz per gallon of water for backpack sprayers or 1 – 2 pints per 100 gallons for large sprayers)

**\* denotes that a surfactant is required for the herbicide to be effective**

For the most effective control: Apply herbicides in late spring/early summer after the plants have fully emerged but when they are still actively growing, and prior to the bud stage.

- 3. Cultural (revegetation):** Yellow starthistle is not very tolerant of shade. Planting desirable plant species to compete with yellow starthistle in susceptible areas, such as areas that have been disturbed from construction, is highly recommended.

**Prevention is the number one management strategy for this plant. Yellow starthistle is not present in Montana and is a high priority if found. If you think you have found this plant, please contact your local County Weed Office.**

**Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply discrimination or endorsement by the Gallatin County Weed Department.**