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SGLN Weed Fact Sheet

Thistles

FAST FACT:

There are four types of thistles that are noxious weeds and regionally controlled in South Gippsland. Landholders are responsible for controlling thistles on their land, and preventing them from spreading.

have I got thistles at my place?

Although there are four main thistle species in South Gippsland that cause problems they have similar features that aid identification. All have a rosette of green leaves that are spiny and deeply divided. Variegated thistles have white vein markings. Thistles can grow into large, dense plants produce flower stems that develop purplish toned flowers surrounded by green spiny bracts. Seeds have parachutes that allow wind dispersal, each plant producing 100's of seeds. Vermin animals such as foxes and rabbits can live in thistle infestations.

why should I worry about them?

Slender/Shore thistles, Spear thistles, Variegated thistles and Californian thistles are spiky and can contaminate wool, hay and silage and injure paws and feet with their spines. They can also hurt the mouths of animals that try to eat them. They can be high in nitrates, which are poisonous to stock. Thistles grow in areas of high nutrient and rainfall which makes them a problem in South Gippsland. They replace desirable species in pasture.

how can I deal with them?

Slender/Shore thistles, Spear thistles and Variegated thistles can be removed by grubbing, making sure to remove most of the tap root. Flowering thistles can still ripen and spread seed after grubbing so plants must be disposed of. Californian thistles are spread by root pieces, so spraying is the only successful control method. **Best time to spray is when seedlings emerge- either spring or autumn.** Slender/Shore thistles and Spear thistles -boom spray while plants are seedlings with a selective registered herbicide such as Amicide 625. Spot spray spring to summer. When mature a stronger chemical is necessary such as Kamba M or Lontrel. Variegated thistles- spray with Kamba M. or Lontrel as seedlings emerge. Californian thistle tends to appear later in the season than other thistles; normally seedlings appear around December, flowering in March. Lontrel is the registered and most effective chemical to use, due to the long deep root system.

where can I get further help?

South Gippsland Landcare Network can arrange a site visit by our Pest Plant and Animal Project Officer to discuss weeds and control.
Ph 03 5682 1934 or 0428 317 928.
SGLN weeds website is at www.southgippslandweeds.com.au. This website has plenty of great information on weed identification and control. You can also contact the Pest Plant and Animal Project Officer through the web page.

South Gippsland Landcare Network

The South Gippsland Landcare Network is made up of 22 Landcare groups. Landcare encourages land stewardship and aims to improve the long term productivity and sustainability of our land.

If you would like to become involved in Landcare in South Gippsland you can contact us on 5662 5759 or email us on sgln@landcare.net

The South Gippsland Community Weeds Taskforce meets to discuss weed control policy and strategies.

Contact the Taskforce through the SGLN.

