

Plumeless Thistle



New Invasive Weed Found in Morrow County

Plumeless thistle, a State Listed Noxious Weed, was recently found in South Morrow County by an observant landowner who was spraying other thistles at the time and saw something that stood out as just a little different. Its previously known range in the state included Grant County, with a few small spots in Wallowa and Klamath Counties.

Plumeless thistle has a branching growth form with spiny wings on the stems that extend to the flowers. The weed grows to over four feet tall. Rosettes form on a stout fleshy taproot. Leaves grow 4-8 inches long and have wavy margins with yellow spines along the edges. Flowers are rose to purple atop globe-shaped heads measuring 1-2 inches in diameter. Bracts of the flowerhead are tipped with yellow spines. Blooms May-July, with seeds developing by late summer.

Plumeless thistle may look like scotch or musk thistle from a far but up close is distinctively different. Once established, plumeless thistle degrades the quality of range and pasture land and if allowed to expand will crowd out desirable forage and exclude livestock from grazing.

If you suspect you have found a thistle that looks a little different than the ones you're used to seeing, or any other suspect weed, please contact the county weed control office to report it to confirm identification. Early detection and rapid response is critical to controlling and eradicating new invaders before they become established.