



Utah County Public Works Weed Control Standard Procedure for Musk and Scotch Thistle Treatment

1. Herbicide Treatment.

- a. Scotch and musk thistles are biennial plants.
 - i. In the first year of life , plant seeds develop into rosette.
 - ii. In the second year of life, the plant bolts, flowers, and develops/spreads seeds.
- b. Herbicide treatment should take place in spring up to fall when plant is actively growing or at the flowering stage of growth. Herbicide treatments should take place before the plant’s seed head matures (or “fluffs”).
 - i. Herbicide treatment of plants with mature seed heads has no benefit since the plants die after producing seeds.
- c. Herbicide treatments can be made with:
 - i. Glyphosate—Non-selective herbicide.
 - ii. 2,4-D—Selective herbicide. Kills broadleaf plants but not grasses, if used according to the label directions.
 - iii. Aminopyralid (Milestone)— Selective herbicide. Kills broadleaf plants but not grasses, if used according to label directions.
 - iv. 2,4-D or aminopyralid are Utah County Weed Control’s preferred choice of herbicide for spraying musk and Scotch thistle.
 - v. There are various other herbicides that can be used to treat musk and Scotch thistle, but are not used by Utah County Weed Control.
- d. A surfactant additive is recommended to be added to the herbicide spray mixture.
- e. After herbicide application, allow the area treated to sit undisturbed for a minimum of two weeks.

Note: The information contained herein represents the standard procedures only for treatment of noxious weeds for Utah County. Utah County does not warrant the procedures contained herein. All legal responsibility for herbicide application is the responsibility of the applicator. If you apply an herbicide, make sure you are not violating any laws and/or restriction specified on the label. If applications are in or around water, verify the herbicide carries an aquatic label. If you have any questions regarding treatment of noxious weeds, please contact your local county public works office or Utah State University Extension office.

2. Additional or Alternative Treatments

- a. Mowing/ Cutting
 - i. Good alternative to herbicide treatment
 - ii. Mow/cut plants before flowers develop into mature seed heads
 - iii. Small areas can be addressed by use of line trimmer
- b. Hand pulling
 - i. Great for small infestations
 - ii. Pull plant before flower develops into mature seed head
 - iii. When pulling, try to pull as much of root system as possible; root system remaining may later grow into full size plant
 - iv. Rosettes can be removed with use of shovel



- c. Seed head removal
 - i. Picking of seed heads when seeds are mature
 - ii. Last recommended treatment
 - iii. Prevents seeds from spreading
 - iv. Works for small infestations
- d. Cultivation
 - i. Disturbing the soil through agricultural practices like tilling or disc work will kill rosettes and prevent plants from maturing
 - ii. Disturbance and moving of soil has potential of spreading noxious weed seeds.

Note: An intergraded control effort of more than one treatment type is recommended for thistle control.

3. Repeat Control Efforts

Complete control is not expected in one year's time. For control/eradication of an infestation, it will take years of consecutive monitoring and treatments. In general, you should have a decrease of thistle every year of treatment, and over time you might accomplish your goal.

