

Plumeless Thistle



Plumeless thistle is a winter annual or biennial that tends to be shorter than other invasive thistles and generally reaches 1 to 4 feet tall. Plumeless thistle can become very weedy and form dense colonies, especially along waterways, ditches, and roadsides in summers following wet falls. It is seldom found in cultivated fields, even when infestations are nearby in roadsides or pastures.



Flowering plumeless thistle has spiny winged stems that completely extend up and down the stem. The leaves are more deeply lobed and narrower than musk thistle and very pubescent underneath. The heads are small (0.5 to 1 inch in diameter) but very numerous and pink to purple in color or very rarely white. The bracts beneath the flowers are very narrow and resemble spines. The heads can be singular or in clusters of 2 to 5.