

Musk Thistle (*Carduus acanthoides* L.)



This is a Class B Weed, It is found only in certain parts of the state. Complete extirpation is impossible.

Musk Thistle will grow to four feet tall or more. Note that the highest part of the stems do not have any leaves on them.

Note also that each stem has a single “head” at its end. There are no side heads.

The heads are not quite mature yet in this image, as they are just beginning to nod like most (but not all) adult heads.

Note that some heads appear flat on top.



This is the average angle that a musk thistle head will nod; sometimes they node more, and sometimes they do not nod at all.

Also note that there is no constriction between the many, tiny, magenta flowers (top right) and the “involucre” (which is covered with projections that are shaped like curved, wide daggers).

Further note that there are no “wings” on the stem (see Scott’s thistle for “wings”).

The artist probably exaggerated the nod angle of the “head” in this drawing. I suspect this was to conserve space. Again note that there are no “wings” on the stem (again see Scott’s thistle), and the upper part of the stem has no leaves.

A enlarged drawing of an individual flower is shown in the extreme upper right of the drawing. The thin style is on top, the single petal is next (it has 4 lobes), then the bristle-like sepals, and then the seed shaped ovary is at the bottom.



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