

| QUESTION | COMMENTS | REFERENCE | RANKING |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Social | | | |
| 1. Restrict human access? | “Dense patches pose a physical barrier to humans.” The spiny nature of the plant is an annoyance to humans. | P & C (2001) | MH |
| 2. Reduce tourism? | “...occurs on neglected sites and pastures of reasonable fertility.” Not a significant weed of recreational areas. However, where it does occur in dense patches, some recreation activities may be affected | P & C (2001) | ML |
| 3. Injurious to people? | Dense spines are present for much of the year. | P & C (2001) | MH |
| 4. Damage to cultural sites? | An erect herb to 2 m high; Infestations uncommon, but plants can be locally abundant at infested sites; dense infestations would have a moderate negative visual impact. | P & C (2001) CDFA ¹ | ML |
| Abiotic | | | |
| 5. Impact flow? | Terrestrial species. | P & C (2001) | L |
| 6. Impact water quality? | Terrestrial species. | P & C (2001) | L |
| 7. Increase soil erosion? | “Even when plants die, they usually remain standing for a long period of time and, by keeping the area bare of other vegetation, can maintain a niche for recruitment of the next generation.” Not an extensive root system; bare patches of soil may be subjected to erosion. | Sindel (1997) ² | ML |
| 8. Reduce biomass? | An annual that grows best on fertile soils. Direct replacement of biomass. | P & C (2001) | ML |
| 9. Change fire regime? | Stems can persist into the next season with spiny phyllaries and receptacles attached. In dense patches, this dry matter may introduce a minor change to the frequency of fire risk. | CDFA | ML |
| Community Habitat | | | |
| 10. Impact on composition (a) high value EVC | EVC=Plains grassland (E); CMA=Port Phillip; Bioreg=Central Victorian Uplands; VH CLIMATE potential. “It grows best on high-nitrogen soils...rather than unimproved native vegetation.” Would have a minor effect on grasses/forbs. | P & C (2001) | ML |
| (b) medium value EVC | EVC=Heathy woodland (D); CMA=Corangamite; Bioreg=Central Victorian Uplands; VH CLIMATE potential. “It grows best on high-nitrogen soils...rather than unimproved native vegetation.” Would have a minor effect on grasses/forbs. | P & C (2001) | ML |
| (c) low value EVC | EVC=Heathy woodland (D); CMA=Corangamite; Bioreg=Otway Plain; H CLIMATE potential. “It grows best on high-nitrogen soils...rather than unimproved native vegetation.” Would have a minor effect on grasses/forbs. | P & C (2001) | ML |
| 11. Impact on structure? | “[Thistles] will often grow above the pasture canopy and dominate the grazing landscape throughout much of the year” “...an effective invader and a strong competitor to establish in grassland communities.” However, “It grows best on high-nitrogen soils...rather than unimproved native vegetation.” Would have a minor effect on the lower stratum in natural ecosystems. | Sindel (1997) P & C (2001) | ML |
| 12. Effect on threatened flora? | | | |

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| Fauna | | | |
| 13. Effect on threatened fauna? | | | |
| 14. Effect on non-threatened fauna? | "Illyrian thistle...is not grazed by stock because of the dense spines." Its presence in natural ecosystems would reduce forage for native fauna. | P & C (2001) | ML |
| 15. Benefits fauna? | No known benefits. | | H |
| 16. Injurious to fauna? | "If it is eaten, the spines cause mechanical damage, particularly around the mouths and eyes of animals." | P & C (2001) | H |
| Pest Animal | | | |
| 17. Food source to pests? | No known as a food source to pests. | | L |
| 18. Provides harbor? | Not known to provide harbor. | | L |
| Agriculture | | | |
| 19. Impact yield? | "Illyrian thistle is competitive in pastures and is not grazed by stock because of the dense spines." "Plants can be locally abundant at infested sites." Likely to reduce carrying capacity and have a major impact on the yield. | P & C (2001) | MH |
| 20. Impact quality? | "Plants contribute to vegetable fault in wool." | P & C (2001) | ML |
| 21. Affect land value? | "Seeds below 4–5 cm may remain viable for many years." "...an infestation of <i>Onopordum illyricum</i> was able to flare again after 6 years control during which time no seeds were allowed back into the soil seed bank." With the necessity for ongoing control measures and the associated cost, the value of land may decrease. | Sindel (1997) | M |
| 22. Change land use? | In pasture situations, some degree of control can be achieved by grazing goats and cattle. "Goats graze flowering plants...and also eat smaller plants and rosettes." No serious impact on agricultural return. | P & C (2001) | M |
| 23. Increase harvest costs? | Not a weed of cropping. | | L |
| 24. Disease host/vector? | None evident | | L |

¹ California Department of Food and Agriculture, *Onopordum* genus, <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/phpps/ipc/weedinfo/onopordum.htm>, viewed 08/04/03

² Sindel, B, 1997, *The Persistence and Management of Thistles in Australian Pastures*, http://www.hortnet.co.nz/publications/nzpps/proceedings/97/97_453.htm, viewed 08/04/03