

THE ENEMY: Yellowstar Thistle (*centaurea solstitialis*).

Strategy: This is a silver-green winter annual knapweed (like Spotted, Russian, and Diffuse) with bright yellow flowers and grows to a height of 36 inches. The bracts (outer side of bud) on this plant are modified into needle-like-spines which makes it almost impossible to walk through. Livestock will rarely travel through the sites, and is in-fact poisonous to them as a food source. Once the seed head shatters and spreads its seeds, the left over bud resembles a very small cotton ball that can be seen over the snow and into the next season.

Attack: Yellowstar thistle has single handedly destroyed many parts of Hells Canyon and has worked its way up the Salmon River and many tributaries. This plant is found in the Northern part of Keating Valley, as well as in Eastern Halfway/Pine Valley, and off Sparta Road. In other words, its not picky where it destroys land. This plant spreads by wind as well as by simply dropping seeds on the ground to sustain local populations. This also makes the plant the fastest spreading plant of all the noxious weeds , and as with all annual weeds the most prolific in attempts for weed management.

Defense: Mechanical control is very effective if you can tolerate the spines on the seed heads. Bio-Control is not very effective due to the plants ability to spread faster than the insects. Many herbicides are effective. 2,4-D is adequate early in the season, but once they get larger one needs to switch to Tordon 22K, Milestone, or Opensight. Treatment is most effective in the fall or early spring. Once established you need to attack the plants with any of the other products listed. After treatment, replanting of useful species is a must. Grasses and clovers are great competitors and desirable for foods for livestock and wildlife. If you suspect that you have seen this plant in our area please call your local weed authority for help and proper identification.