

Cirsium vulgare (Savi) Ten.

Family:

Asteraceae

Tenore, M. (1836) *Flora Napolitana ossia Descrizione delle Piante indigene del Regno di Napoli* 5 5: 209.

Common name:

Spear Thistle; Bull Thistle; Scotch Thistle

Stem

Usually flowers and fruits as a herb but occasionally flowers as a shrub about 1 m tall.

Leaves

Upper surface and margins of the leaf blade clothed in sharp spines. Underside of the leaf blade clothed in fine gossamer-like matted hairs. Leaf blades +/- run down the twigs forming two spiny wings. Intramarginal vein well inside the margin. Leaf blades about 4-30 x 9-10 cm, sessile.

Flowers

Flowers produced in a spiny head about 4 cm diameter including the spines. Calyx composed of numerous fine white hairs (pappus). Pollen grains white or translucent, surface spiny. Style protruding well beyond the corolla at anthesis. Stigma small and inconspicuous. Staminal filaments hairy, free from one another, anthers fused.

Fruit

Achene about 3-4 mm long, pappus opens into a ball of fluff. Embryo oily.

Seedlings

Cotyledons elliptic to obovate, about 15-21 x 8-12 mm, glabrous on both surfaces. First pair of true leaves clothed in thick white hairs when young but sparsely clothed in coarse hairs when older, margins spiny. At the tenth leaf stage: leaves basal i.e. no development of a stem, margins spiny (pungent pointed), undersurface clothed in pale woolly hairs. Seed germination time 13 to 25 days.

Distribution and Ecology

An introduced species originally from Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, now naturalised in NEQ, CEQ and all parts of southern Australia. Altitudinal range in NEQ not known but collected in the 750-1000 m range. Usually grows as a weed of agricultural land but sometimes found along roads in rain forest.

Synonyms

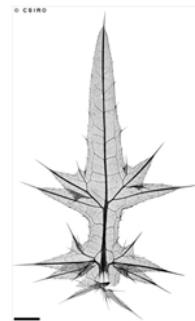
Carduus vulgaris Savi, *Fl. Pis.* 2: 241(1798).

RFK Code

3467



Habit, leaves and flowers. © CSIRO



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



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