

NODDING THISTLE

Carduus nutans
Asteraceae



Nodding thistle gall fly

Three agents have been released to attack nodding thistle: nodding thistle receptacle weevil (*Rhinocyllus conicus*), nodding thistle gall fly (*Urophora solstitialis*), and nodding thistle crown weevil (*Trichosirocalus horridus*). The nodding thistle receptacle weevil is effective at destroying most seeds produced by primary flowers in spring and early summer. The nodding thistle gall fly complements the nodding thistle receptacle weevil by attacking seed produced by secondary and tertiary flowers later in the season. The nodding thistle crown weevil damages rosette plants, especially during the cooler months of the year. Nodding thistle populations have noticeably declined in recent years in many parts of New Zealand. Two new agents currently being released against Californian thistle, the Californian thistle stem miner (*Ceratopion onopordi*) and the green thistle beetle (*Cassida rubiginosa*), are likely to add further pressure to nodding thistle.