

Silybum marianum

COMMON NAME

variegated thistle

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Silybum marianum (L.) Gaertn.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

NVS CODE

SILMAR

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

SIMILAR TAXA

Erect biennial thistle growing up to 2.5m high and 2m wide; prominent white veins and blotches on spiny leaves which grow up to 60cm; large purple flowers are surrounded by spines and produce 50-200 black or brown seeds; seeds are 6-8mm long with downy hairs at one end.

FLOWERING

November, December, January (February)

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple

FRUITING

December-March

YEAR NATURALISED

1969

ORIGIN

Mediterranean, S.W. Europe

Life Cycle Comments

Plants die in summer.

Dispersal

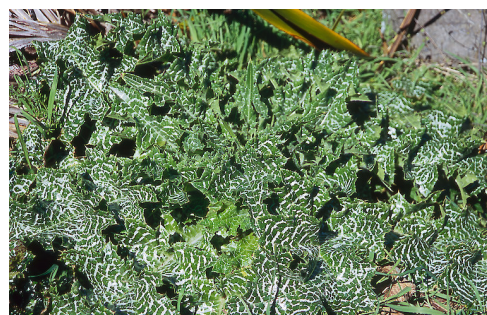
Most wind dispersal is probably within 10m of the plant. Seed can be spread in hay, by water, in mud, agricultural produce and grain, on machinery or animals.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/silybum-marianum/>



Turakirae Head. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



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