

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Plant Abstract

Element Code: PDAST2E370

Data Sensitivity: No

CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE

NAME: *Cirsium wrightii* Gray
COMMON NAME: Wright's Thistle; Wright's Marsh Thistle; (Cienega Thistle PLW)
SYNONYMS: *Carduus wrightii*, *Cnicus wrightii*
FAMILY: Asteraceae (Compositae)

AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION: A. Gray. *Plantae Wrightianae Texano-Novomexicano* part 2. In: *Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge* Vol. 5.

TYPE LOCALITY: "San Bernardino Cienega, Arizona"

TYPE SPECIMEN: Wright No. 1290

TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS: Approximately 200 species of *Cirsium* in North America, 30 species in Arizona. *C. wrightii* is one of the few thistles restricted to boggy soil.

DESCRIPTION: Biennial or monocarpic perennial herb; stem strict growing up to 1.0-2.5 m (3.2-8.2 ft.) tall, with erect branching, strongly decurrent leaves, relatively small, numerous heads. Basal leaves ample, succulent, 30 cm or more long, sinuate or pinnatifid, weakly prickly with short black spines, nearly glabrous, the thin weblike wool tardily deciduous. Prickles of involucre very small, less than 2.0 mm (0.08 in.). Phyllaries numerous with conspicuous glandular dorsal line. Corollas white or pink; style tips about 3 mm long.

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: Erect with strict branching; strongly decurrent (downward extending) leaves; small, numerous heads with very small (less than 2.0 mm (0.08 in.)) prickles on the phyllaries. *C. wrightii* differs from *C. texanum* in being an obligate wetland species with nearly glabrous leaves and stem and thick succulent leaves (Barlow-Irick 1999).

ILLUSTRATIONS: Color photo (Barlow-Irick, Compiled 1999)

TOTAL RANGE: Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Chihuahua and Sonora, Mexico.
Known populations are widely disjunct.

RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA: Historically from what is now the San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge, Cochise County. The San Bernardino Cienega site may be extirpated.

SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS

GROWTH FORM: Herbaceous perennial

PHENOLOGY: March-August

BIOLOGY: This species grows readily in cultivation, and has been known to hybridize.

HABITAT: Wet, alkaline soils in spring seeps, cienegas, and marshy edges of streams and ponds, in otherwise semi-arid to arid areas.

ELEVATION: 3,450 - 8,500 ft (1130-2600 m).

EXPOSURE:

SUBSTRATE: Wet soil

PLANT COMMUNITY: Marsh

POPULATION TRENDS: Known from fewer than ten locations. During recent surveys (1994) of New Mexico localities, Sivinski was able to find the species at just two sites.

SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS: None

STATE STATUS: None

OTHER STATUS: None

MANAGEMENT FACTORS: Dependent on wet soil. Introduction of insects as biological control for weedy thistles may pose a grave hazard for non-weedy thistle species. The effects of fire and livestock grazing on this species have not been studied

PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN: Historic type locality now on San Bernardino Wildlife Refuge.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS: Survey historic and potential habitat. Taxonomy of this poorly known species should be reviewed as new populations are found.

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: State, federal and private.

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION**LITERATURE CITATIONS:**

- Barlow-Irick, P. Compiled 1999. *Cirsium wrightii* (Wright's marsh thistle).
<http://nmrareplants.unm.edu/reports/cirwri.htm>. Accessed 2001.
- Kearney, T.H. and R.H. Peebles. 1960. Arizona flora (with supplement). University of California Press, Berkeley. p. 952.
- Munz, P. and K. Keck. 1970. A California Flora. University of California Press, Berkeley. p. 1274.
- NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. 2001. Version 1.6. Arlington, Virginia, USA: NatureServe. Available: <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: December 10, 2001).
- Warren, P.L. 1995. Pers comm to D. Ide (AGFD) June 5, 1995.

MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:

- Patricia Barlow - University of New Mexico
 Bob Sivinski - New Mexico Forestry and Resources

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Many *Cirsium* species will hybridize freely in areas of contact (Munz and Keck 1970). According to Barlow-Irick (Compiled 1999), "The type location for this species is, "Around springs near San Bernardino, on the borders of New Mexico and Sonora, Oct." This appears to be a location in Cochise County, Arizona, but this taxon has not been relocated in that county. Known populations are widely disjunct."

Revised: 1995-05-15 (PLW)
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