

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

**Plant Abstract**

**Element Code:** PDAST2E390

**Data Sensitivity:** No

**CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE**

**NAME:** *Cirsium virginense* Welsh

**COMMON NAME:** Virgin Thistle

**SYNONYMS:** *Cirsium virginensis*

**FAMILY:** Asteraceae

**AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION:** S.L. Welsh, Great Basin Naturalist 42(2): 201-202. 1982.

**TYPE LOCALITY:** St. George, Washington County, Utah, elevation 2950 ft.

**TYPE SPECIMEN:** HT: BRY. S.L. Welsh 21234, 13 June 1982. IT: CAS, ISC, MO, NY, POM, RM, UT, UTC.

**TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS:** One of about 18 species of *Cirsium* in Arizona. This is a large genus, with around 200 species distributed in North America and Eurasia (Hickman 1993, Lehr 1978); about 100 of which occur in North America (USDA, NRCS 2002). Welsh published this species as *C. virginensis*, which USFWS follows (9/93). Kartesz (1994) corrected the species spelling to "*virginense*".

**DESCRIPTION:** A spiny taprooted perennial or annual herb, with stems 6-20 dm (24-79 in) tall, mostly covered with white wooly hairs, and spreading by creeping roots. Stem leaves 1.5-15+ cm (0.6-6+ in), decurrent on stem, whitish tomentose on both sides. Basal rosette of unlobed leaves 6-35(-40) cm [2.4-14(-16) in] x 1-5(-9) cm, with 1-4 mm long spines. Leaves often reduced to spiny bracts upwards. Lavender to pink flowers, 1.5-15 cm long, borne from small, pale purple flower heads. Involucres 13-20 mm tall, 12-32 mm wide, the bracts ovate-lanceolate to narrowly lanceolate, brownish to straw colored, or often suffused with purple; spines 2-6(-8)mm long, yellowish. (Welsh 1982, Welsh et al. 1993, Falk & Jenkins et al. 2001).

**AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION:** This species is distinguished from other species of *Cirsium* by the small flower heads, and long clasping leaf bases, and spinose-toothed leaves (Welsh 1982, NRPS 2003-2005).

**ILLUSTRATIONS:** Color photo of Isotype collection (NY-167535, NYBG, [in http://207.156.243.8/emu/vh/specimen.php?irn=424517](http://207.156.243.8/emu/vh/specimen.php?irn=424517))  
Line drawing (*in* Falk and Jenkins et al. 2001)

Color photos of plant and flower heads (Lee Hughes/BLM, in Falk & Jenkins et al. 2001)

Color photo of habitat (Lee Hughes/BLM, in Falk & Jenkins et al. 2001)

Line drawing (Cronquist et al. 1994: 397)

Color photos of plant and habitat (Utah Native Plant Society 2003-2005, in <http://www.utahrareplants.org>)

Line drawing (Utah Native Plant Society 2003-2005, in <http://www.utahrareplants.org>)

**TOTAL RANGE:** Known from a few wet saline areas in southwestern Utah (Washington Co.), adjacent northwestern Arizona (Mohave Co.) and extreme southeastern Nevada (Clark Co.).

**RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA:** Along the Virgin River near Little Field, in extreme northwestern Mohave County. Also reported from Peach Springs Canyon.

### **SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS**

**PHENOLOGY:** Perennial forb/herb.

**GROWTH FORM:** Flowers (May-)June – September.

**BIOLOGY:**

**HABITAT:** Alkaline seeps, washes, and stream terraces; occasionally in hanging gardens. Elevation range from 600-2000 m according to Cronquist (1994).

**ELEVATION:** In Arizona elevation ranges from 1,650-1,895 ft (503-578 m) based on unpublished record from HDMS (AGFD, accessed 2001, 2005). Falk & Jenkins et al. (2001) report elevation range of 1,800-3,116 ft (550-950 m). In Utah (URPS 2003-2005), from 2,800-3,100 ft (854-946 m). In Nevada (NNHP 2001), from 1,246-2,165 ft (380-660 m).

**EXPOSURE:** NW slopes of 10-30+%.

**SUBSTRATE:** Sandy or gravelly, often alluvial, moist, alkaline slopes and washes and about alkaline springs (Cronquist et al. 1994). Collected on limestone rock outcropping (SEINet accessed 2005).

**PLANT COMMUNITY:** Riparian communities within the Mohave Desertscrub community. Associated species include: *Adiantum* sp. (maidenhair), *Agrostis* sp. (bentgrass), *Distichlis spicata* (Desert saltgrass), *Fraxinus* sp. (ash), *Phragmites australis* (Common reed), *Pluchea purpurascens* (March fleabane), *Populus fremontii* (Fremont cottonwood), *Tamarix* sp. (saltcedar), and *Vitis arizonica* (canyon grape). (NYBG, NY-658377).

**POPULATION TRENDS:** Unknown

## **SPECIES PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION**

**ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:** None (USDI, FWS 1996)  
[Category 2 (USDI, FWS 1993)]  
[Category 2 (USDI, FWS 1990)]  
[Category 2 (USDI, FWS 1985)]  
[Category 2 (USDI, FWS 1983)]

**STATE LIST STATUS:** Salvage Restricted (ADA, ANPL 1999)  
[Salvage Restricted (ADA, ANPL 1993)]

**OTHER STATUS:** None

**MANAGEMENT FACTORS:**

**CONSERVATION MEASURES TAKEN:**

**SUGGESTED PROJECTS:** Search areas of suitable habitat for the presence of this species.

**LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:** BIA – Hualapai Reservation; NPS – Lake Mead National Recreation Area; Private. Possibly located on BLM – Arizona Strip Field Office land. In Utah: BIA – Paiute Tribal Lands; BLM – St. George Field Office; USFS – Dixie National Forest; Private. In Nevada in order of predominance: NPS, BLM, Private, and possibly Nevada state lands.

## **SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION**

### **REFERENCES:**

- Arizona Revised Statutes, Chapter 7. 1993. Arizona Native Plant Law. Appendix A.  
Arizona Revised Statutes, Chapter 7. 1999. Arizona Native Plant Law. Appendix A.  
Cronquist, A., A.H. Holmgren, N.H. Holmgren, J.L. Reveal, and P.K. Holmgren. 1994. Intermountain Flora, vascular plants of the Intermountain West, U.S.A. Volume five Asterales by A. Cronquist. The New York Botanical Garden. Bronx, New York. Pp. 394, 397-398.  
Falk, M., P. Jenkins, et al; Arizona Rare Plant Committee. 2001 Arizona Rare Plant Guide. Published by a collaboration of agencies and organizations. Pages unnumbered.  
Hickman, J.C. ed. 1993. The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California. University of California Press. Berkeley, California. P. 232.  
Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS). Retrieved 9/10/2003 from ITIS, <http://www.itis.usda.gov>.

- Lehr, J.H. 1978. A catalogue of the flora of Arizona. Desert Botanical Garden. Phoenix, Arizona. p. 157.
- Missouri Botanical Garden – TROPICOS, Nomenclatural Data Base. *Cirsium virginense* S.L. Welsh. [http://mobot.mobot.org/cgi-bin/search\\_vast](http://mobot.mobot.org/cgi-bin/search_vast). Accessed: 10 Sep 2003, 21 Sep 2005.
- NatureServe. 2003. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 1.8. Arlington, Virginia. Available: <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: September 10, 2003).
- NatureServe. 2005. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 4.5. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available: <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: September 21, 2005).
- Nevada Natural Heritage Program. 2001. Rare Plant Fact Sheet: *Cirsium virginense* Welsh (Virgin River Thistle). <http://heritage.nv.gov>.
- SEINet. Collections Search Result. Accessed 9/21/2005 at <http://seinet.asu.edu/collections/list.jsp>.
- The New York Botanical Garden. NYBG Specimens Detailed Results. [http://scisun.nybg.org:8890/searchdb/owa/wwwcatalog\\_detail\\_list](http://scisun.nybg.org:8890/searchdb/owa/wwwcatalog_detail_list). Accessed: 9/10/2003.
- The New York Botanical Garden. NYBG Specimens Search Results. <http://207.156.243.8/emu/vh/specimen.php?irn=424517>. (Accessed: 9/21/2005).
- USDA, NRCS. 2002. The PLANTS Database, Version 3.5 (<http://plants.usda.gov>). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.
- USDI, Fish and Wildlife Service. 1983. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Supplement to Review of Plant Taxa for Listing; Proposed Rule. Federal Register 48(229):53651.
- USDI, Fish and Wildlife Service. 1985. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Review of Plant Taxa for Listing as Endangered or Threatened Species; Notice of Review. Federal Register 50(188):00028.
- USDI, Fish and Wildlife Service. 1990. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Review of Plant Taxa for Listing as Endangered or Threatened Species; Notice of Review. Federal Register 55(35):6207.
- USDI, Fish and Wildlife Service. 1993. Plant Taxa for Listing as Endangered or Threatened Species; Notice of Review. Federal Register 58(188):51168.
- USDI, Fish and Wildlife Service. 1996. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Review of Plant and Animal Taxa that are Candidates for Listing as Endangered or Threatened Species; Notice of Review. Proposed Rule. Federal Register 61(40):7595-7613.
- Utah Native Plant Society. 2003-2005. Utah Rare Plant Guide. Salt Lake City, UT: Utah Rare Plant Guide Home Page. <http://www.utahrareplants.org>. Accessed 9/21/2005.
- Welsh, S.L. 1982. New taxa of thistles (*Cirsium*; Asteraceae) in Utah. Great Basin Naturalist 42(2):201-202.
- Welsh, S.L., N.D. Atwood, S. Goodrich, and L.C. Higgins, eds. 1993. A Utah flora. Brigham Young University. Provo, Utah. Pp. 195-196.

**MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:**

Lee Hughes - Arizona Strip District, Bureau of Land Management

Andy Lawrenzi - The Arizona Nature Conservancy, Tucson  
Stan Welsh - Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Revised:** 1989-10-24 (SST)  
1998-03-16 (SSS)  
1998-12-15 (DJG)  
2003-09-25 (SMS)  
2005-09-29 (SMS)

To the user of this abstract: you may use the entire abstract or any part of it. We do request, however, that if you make use of this abstract in plans, reports, publications, etc. that you credit the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Please use the following citation:

Arizona Game and Fish Department. 20XX (= **year of last revision as indicated at end of abstract**). X...X (= **taxon of animal or plant**). Unpublished abstract compiled and edited by the Heritage Data Management System, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Phoenix, AZ. X pp.