



Yellow Starthistle: Because of the spiny nature of yellow starthistle, livestock and wildlife avoid grazing in heavily infested areas. Thus, yellow starthistle can greatly increase the cost of managing livestock. It can also reduce land value and reduce access to recreational areas. In addition, starthistle infestations can reduce wildlife habitat and forage, displace native plants, and decrease native plant and animals, but also threaten natural ecosystems and nature reserves by fragmenting sensitive plant and animal habitat because of its high water usage, yellow starthistle threatens both human economic interests as well as native plant ecosystems. Based on a conservative estimate of the weeds coverage in the Sacramento River watershed, it has been estimated that yellow starthistle may cause an economic loss of \$16 to 56 million in water conservation per year. When ingested by horses, yellow starthistle causes a neurological disorder of the brain called nigropallidal encephalomalacia or "chewing disease". There is no known treatment for horses that have been poisoned by yellow starthistle and in most cases the animals will die from starvation or dehydration. Also, all grazing animals can sustain damage to their eyes from the plant's long sharp spines.