

Nettle, nightshade and nodding thistle

- Summary** Common in the South Island and lower North Island. Annual.
- Identification** Recognised by its dark green sharply toothed leaves. When touched, causes stinging for a few minutes from poison released by its fine bristles.
- Characteristics** Usually disappears from pasture but can return in patches where pasture is thin. Not eaten by stock.



- Summary** Widespread. Often confused with deadly nightshade. Annual.
- Identification** Upright plant that can grow tall and leafy. The leaves and stem can develop a purple tinge, especially late in the season when stressed. It produces a small white flower and bunches of berries that are either green or black.
- Characteristics** Germinates in the spring and dies with frosts in autumn. Often confused with deadly nightshade, which is much more poisonous and less common, mainly found around Christchurch. Black nightshade is spread through birds consuming its fruit and spreading seed through their droppings.



- Summary** Common biennial - prefers a dry climate.
- Identification** Similar growth habit and size to Scotch thistle. Has red-purple flowers a bit larger than Scotch thistle, and they droop long before maturity.
- Characteristics** Is more difficult to control than Scotch thistle. Three insects have been introduced for biological control, one by feeding on the seed in the flower head, one that forms galls and a third that attacks the rosettes. Herbicide-resistant ecotypes have developed in many parts of the country.

