

SPEAR THISTLE

biocontrol



Female spear thistle gall fly (Photo R. Richter)

Spear thistle gall fly

- Adult females lay eggs at the base of new flowers during spring.
- Larvae feed inside the developing flowers forming a hard gall in which they hibernate during winter. Adults emerge in spring.

How and when to release

- In autumn, press dry flower heads with fingers to feel for hard lumps (this is best done wearing thick gloves).
- Release into a new area by enclosing the gall-infested flower heads in a wire mesh basket suspended off the ground (e.g. attached to a star picket or gate), but in an area where it cannot be damaged by livestock.



Spear thistle receptacle weevil
(Photo M. van Someren)



Gall fly larvae inside the thistle head



Spear thistle receptacle weevil

- The larvae of the receptacle weevil feed within the thistle heads during spring, reducing the number of seeds produced per flower. This weevil is not common in the North East and active redistribution from established locations in Victoria is required.



Australian Government



National Landcare Program

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