

# Poisonous plant



## Variegated thistle (*Silybum marianum*)

Noxious Weeds Display sponsored NIWAC  
(Northern Inland Weeds Advisory Committee)



Variegated thistle contains high levels of nitrate. If eaten in any quantity, this plant can be fatal to livestock.

Cattle (especially hungry travelling stock) are susceptible to poisoning. Deaths can occur within hours of the symptoms.

Sheep can also be affected, particularly if feeding on plants that are drying out after slashing or herbicide treatment.

Symptoms in cattle include a bluish discolouration of the lips,

gums and inside of the eyelids, shortage of breath, sudden muscular twitching and staggering. Also, the blood turns chocolate-coloured.

**Don't allow your stock to "pig out" on variegated thistle!**



Reference "Plants of Western New South Wales" (Cunningham, Mulham, Milthorpe & Leigh) - Photos & presentation by Les Tanner, North West Weeds County Council. 8/03