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Geographical range

Amazing Species: Silver Thistle

The **Silver Thistle**, *Stemmacantha cynaroides*, is classified as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. It is confined to the high mountains of Tenerife, the largest of the Canary Islands. Every winter the plants emerge and grow up to 30cm; in the summer they produce rose coloured clusters of flowers.

This species is strongly predated by rabbits and sheep, *Ovis aries*, which were introduced by humans in 1970 for hunting and have increased in numbers. The Silver Thistle is a long-lived plant, but due to constant predation many young plants are destroyed before even setting seed. The persistence of this species, therefore, depends on the seeds produced by the remaining individuals surviving in the soil and germinating.

This plant grows in the Teide National Park. After its inclusion in the Regional Catalogue of Endangered Plants, it has benefited from a recovery plan through which populations within the park were fenced off from grazing. It is protected under the EC Habitats Directive and the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, which is signed by most European states.

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