This invasive weed, a native of Europe, has spread throughout the western U.S. It grows as both an annual or biennial, forming a ground-hugging rosette in spring that is followed by a flowering upright stem.

Iberian thistle looks very much like purple starthistle until the mature seed head forms. Both species are listed as a noxious weeds by Nevada Administrative Code, so one need not wait to determine species before removing.

Distinguishing features:
- This thistle reaches over 6 feet at maturity. Fine hairs cover the stems.
- The leaves are divided into narrow lobes and are also covered with fine hairs.
- The abundant purple flowers form at the end of branches and have 1 inch thorn-like tan projections at their base.

Take action:
- Report its location to the land owner, gardener, manager or park ranger.
- Remove all weed seeds from your clothing, shoes, pets, camping gear, vehicle, and tire treads before moving out of an infested area. Equipment may require steam cleaning before moving to new areas.
- Monitor plantings, roadsides, and bare areas. Carefully remove any seeds and dig up the plant. Dispose of the seeds, shoots, and roots, all of which can grow a new plant, in a sealed garbage bag through the trash. Herbicides may also be available to kill this plant.

Your reward:
A cleaner, healthier environment and the satisfaction that you have helped make the difference!

For more information about controlling this and other invasive weeds, contact:
Nevada Cooperative Extension 775-784-1334; Nevada Division of Agriculture Bureau of Plant Industry, 775-688-1180; or Your local Weed District manager or Conservation District:

This weed crowds out desirable forage and alters the native habitats. It exists throughout the northern and western U.S. and is spreading rapidly to new areas.