

# CANADA THISTLE

*Cirsium arvense*

Asteraceae, the sunflower family

Category: Containment

## FACTSHEET INFORMATION

### Summary of Invasiveness

- Canada thistle is a highly aggressive weed that produces allelochemicals which inhibit the growth of nearby plant species, reducing biodiversity.
- It causes significant crop loss resulting in great economic damages.
- Has the ability to produce up to 5,300 seeds per plant and seeds can remain viable in soil for up to 10 years.
- Reproduces vegetatively by creeping roots, root fragments, and seeds.

### Description

- Erect perennial that grows up to 3 feet tall.
- Creeping roots can grow 20 feet deep and 15 feet across.
- Leaves are shallow-lobed and toothed with spiny margins.
- Upper leaf surface is dark green and smooth, lower is light green with woolly hairs.
- Numerous clustered flower heads with purplish-pink disk flowers.
- Achenes containing seeds are tan with feathery bristles.

### Introduction and Movement

- Canada thistle is native to south-eastern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean area and was introduced as a seed contaminant.
- It inhabits disturbed areas such as roadsides, cultivated fields, pastures, and rangelands.
- Spreads primarily through seed dispersal by wind, water, human/animal vectors, and as a contaminant in crop seed.

### Prevention Strategy

- To prevent accidental introductions, learn how to identify Canada thistle and eradicate infestations on your property.
- Always remove and properly dispose of all seed and plant materials on vehicles, clothing, shoes and pets before you exit or enter outdoor recreational sites.
- Always Remember To:

**KNOCK IT OFF!**

#### Sources

- CABI Invasive Species Compendium: <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/13628>
- Idaho's Noxious Weeds 9th Edition, University of Idaho: <http://www.extension.uidaho.edu/publishing/pdf/BUL/BUL816.pdf>.



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