

# PERENNIAL SOWTHISTLE

*Sonchus arvensis*

Asteraceae, the sunflower family

Category: Control

Michael Rasy, University of Alaska, Bugwood.org

## FACTSHEET INFORMATION

### Summary of Invasiveness

- Perennial sowthistle is an invasive plant that outcompetes desired plants for nutrients and space, reducing biodiversity.
- It can significantly reduce crop yields, especially cereal crops.
- The plant is unpalatable to livestock, reducing forage yields.

### Description

- Erect perennial growing up to 6 feet tall.
- Plant is erect with branching in the upper portion.
- Leaves are deeply toothed to nearly entire with a clasping base and prickly margins. Upper leaves are fewer and much smaller than basal leaves.
- Dandelion-like flowers are bright yellow to orange-yellow.
- Flower stalks and bracts are covered with gland-tipped hairs.
- Flattened, brown achenes have longitudinal ridges crossed by wrinkles with squared upper end with pappus of white hairs.
- Plant contains white, milky sap.

### Introduction and Movement

- Perennial sowthistle is native to Europe and was likely introduced as a seed contaminant.
- Inhabits cultivated fields, riparian areas, meadows, pastures, gardens, roadsides, and disturbed sites.
- It can easily spread by wind-dispersed seeds, vegetatively by root fragments washing downstream, and as a seed contaminant.

### Prevention Strategy

- To prevent accidental introductions, learn how to identify Perennial sowthistle and eradicate infestations on your property.
- When gardening, always research plants before planting and only purchase seeds from licensed nurseries.
- 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: **KNOW WHAT YOU GROW & KNOCK IT OFF!**

#### Sources

- CABI Invasive Species Compendium: <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/50583>
- Idaho's Noxious Weeds 9th Edition, University of Idaho: <http://www.extension.uidaho.edu/publishing/pdf/BUL/BUL816.pdf>.



John Cardina, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org



Michael Rasy, University of Alaska, Bugwood.org



David Cappaert, Bugwood.org

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: [INVASIVESPECIES.IDAHO.GOV](http://INVASIVESPECIES.IDAHO.GOV)  
TO REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES IN IDAHO, PLEASE CALL 1-877-336-8676.

# PERENNIAL SOWTHISTLE DISTRIBUTION MAP

