



INVASIVE PLANT OF THE MONTH

JULY/AUGUST 2021



<https://weedecology.css.cornell.edu>

CANADA THISTLE

Cirsium arvense

HISTORY & IDENTIFICATION

- was accidentally introduced to North America in the 1600s from Europe.
- is designated as a noxious weed in 43 states.
- an erect, perennial herbaceous plant, to 4 ft. tall.
- leaves are lance-shaped with irregularly lobes, 2-6" long.
- flowers are clustered purple to white and occur in late June to August.
- seeds are 1-1½ in. long with 1000 per plant and viable up to 20 years.

LIFE CYCLE & GROWTH HABIT

- can out compete by shading with its dense growth and by tapping deep into the soil removing water and nutrients for other plants.
- can grow in soils with salt concentrations of up to 2%.
- favored conditions are unshaded, moist, aerated clay loam.
- spreads by wind-dispersed seed and expands locally by vegetative means through lateral roots and root fragments.

PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

IDENTIFY

There are a number of look-alikes, both native and exotics, which are difficult to distinguish without assistance. The common, weedy thistles in PA include bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*), and plumeless thistle (*Carduus acanthoides*).

CONTROL

- Control by exhausting the storage roots by removing the first shoots in early June.
- Then, persistent removal of shoots by weeding or mowing will eliminate it in 2 years.
- A 21 day weeding schedule is optimal.



<https://www.invasive.org>

RESOURCES

- <https://www.invasive.org/alien/pubs/midatlantic/ciar.htm>
- https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Plants_Land_Water/PlantIndustry/NIPPP/Documents/canada_thistle%20article.pdf
- <https://mdinvasives.org/iotm/april-2005/>
- https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs142p2_018027.pdf
- <https://weedecology.css.cornell.edu/weed/weed.php?id=9>