

Cirsium arvense, Canada Thistle

The Canada Thistle is a rhizomatous perennial plant that is native to Europe and Asia. It is shade intolerant, so it is rarely found within wooded areas and prefers open fields and grasslands.

Description: This herbaceous plant can grow 1-3 feet tall, branching more in the upper half of the plant. Leaves are dark green, with the undersides having short, prickly white hairs. The basal leaves are 5-8 inches in length and arranged alternately on the stem.

Control: This plant can be controlled by the repeated use of herbicides. The thistle can also be managed by mowing while the plant is in flower for multiple years.

Look-alikes: There are several native and exotic thistle species that are difficult to distinguish between, one being the Field Thistle (*Cirsium discolor*). Bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) is similar and common in the region but has much more pronounced spines and thicker leaves.

Flower Time and Description: Flowers bloom from June to August. This species has female and male plants; female flowers are fragrant and larger than male flowers. Flowers on the Thistle may range from purple, pink to white.

