



Ada County Pest of the Month

A quick guide to identifying and controlling invasive plants and animals found in the county



Quick Facts



- **Name:** *Canada Thistle (Cirsium arvense)*
- **Found:** Common on ditches, pastures, gardens, roadsides and disturbed areas.
- **Briefly:** Canada Thistle is a native plant of Eurasia; introduced as a contaminant in crop seed. The seeds are dispersed by the wind up to 1,000 yards it has a rhizomatous root system, often referred to as creeping roots.

Identification

Canada Thistle is an erect perennial plant with a rhizomatous root system that can reach as much as 20 feet deep and 15 feet across. Canada Thistle has wavy, medium green leaves that have yellow spines at the leaf edges. The shallowly toothed leaves are oblong to lance shaped, are smooth and dark green on the top, but the bottom of the leaf is lighter in color with woolly hairs. Canada Thistle has a multi-branched central stem, and can reach a height of about 3 feet tall at maturity. Canada Thistle can mature and flower in as little as 2 months, and will exhibit numerous purple-lavender to off-white flowers at the ends of the stalks.



How To Control



L.L. Berry, Bugwood.org

Mechanical control such as hand weeding, burning, and tillage seldom offer satisfactory control of Canada Thistle because the roots sprout new shoots rapidly. Properly managed pasture grasses or close growing alfalfa plants offer some measure of competition for Canada Thistle, but will not entirely prevent or control the growth of this aggressive weed.

More control methods continue on the next page

Control...Continued



Herbicides: A common approach to chemical control of Canada Thistle is to use a combination of 2,4-D and Dicamba. In ornamental settings, a late spring herbicide treatment, followed by regular summer mowing and an early fall herbicide treatment offer the highest level of control possible with this product.



Phil Westra, Colorado State University,
Bugwood.org



Two years underground growth of Canada Thistle from one foot of root!

Photo: Purdue University
Department of Botany

In agricultural settings, herbicide options that contain Chlopyralid and 2,4-D offer a greatly enhanced level of control compared to products containing Dicamba. These products are labeled for some crops and pasture settings, and are selected on a case by case basis, as they are not labeled for, and **should not be used on home lawns or gardens.**

Note: Chemical control of any weed can be difficult and confusing. If you are not experienced in chemical control or do not understand the product label, you should consult a licensed applicator to assist you. Inappropriate application can kill desirable vegetation, and may violate federal law.



For questions or concerns, please contact us:

Ada County Weed, Pest and Mosquito Abatement

975 E. Pine - Meridian Idaho

208-577-4646

weedandpest@adaweb.net

www.adaweb.net/weedandpest.aspx