

Canada Thistle *Cirsium arvense* L.

Identification:

Canada thistle is a perennial plant that starts out as a rosette and can grow up to four feet tall. This plant is colony forming and can sprout new plants from the extensive root system. Flower heads are pink, purple or white, and are ½" to 3/4" in diameter. Flowers occur from July to August. The leaves are dark green in color, alternately arranged on a hairy stem, and are oblong to lance shaped with sharp tipped lobes.

* Be sure not to confuse the Canada Thistle with the native Wavyleaf Thistle. Wavyleaf Thistle has lighter colored flowers-pale pink to creamy white, and has deeply lobed leaf margins. The leaves appear gray, rather than green. The flowering heads of Wavyleaf Thistle are large and distinct, usually appearing as one flower per stem. Flower head bracts have a white margin.



Potential Damage:

Canada Thistle reduces forage in crops, pastures and rangelands. It is a competitor for light, moisture and nutrients, which causes a reduction in crop yield and reduces biodiversity in native vegetation stands.



Control and Prevention:

Take care not to drive or walk through infested areas. Stop and inspect vehicle between patrol units. MARK infested sites with bright pink or orange flagging. MARK SITE on map and provide to Refuge Operations Specialist upon return from field. Plants can be pulled prior to seed set. Constant effort, annually, during spring and fall growing seasons is necessary to prevent spread of this plant. Canada Thistle is a class C noxious weed in Washington state and land owners are required to prevent all seed production and prevent the spread of this weed.



Current Status on the Hanford Reach National Monument:

Canada Thistle exists on the Monument along the irrigation wasteway on the Saddle Mountain and Wahluke units. This weed has been located near the springs on ALE. **Please be aware and look for this plant everywhere, especially on the Wahluke and Saddle Mountain units.**