

Know Your Nebraska Noxious Weeds

CANADA THISTLE *Cirsium arvense* (L.) Scop.

Over generations both the rate of introduction and spread of noxious weeds have increased significantly. This change is mainly due to an increase in human travel, expanding commerce through trade, and a lack of knowledge of how weeds are spread. By becoming educated about noxious weeds, you're doing your part to help stop their spread and protect the environment.

What is the threat?

If noxious weeds are left uncontrolled, the Nebraska that we enjoy today will look much different for future generations. Do your part, become educated and help stop the spread of noxious weeds.

How did Canada thistle get here?

[Canada thistle](#) is native to western Eurasia and North Africa and was first introduced in America around 1750. Canada thistle was Nebraska's first plant to be declared a noxious weed in 1873.



What does Canada thistle look like?

Canada thistle is one of 5 nonnative thistle species in Nebraska, so identification is important. There are also 5 native thistles that belong in the State and are beneficial to insects and wildlife. Click on this link to the [Thistles of Nebraska](#) to learn more about Nebraska's thistles.

What is the impact of doing nothing?

Canada thistle is unpalatable to livestock and reduces forage production and utilization. It outcompetes desirable vegetation for water, light, and nutrients. If left uncontrolled Canada thistle will completely dominate and leave the land useless. Because of its aggressive nature, not only is your property at risk but Canada thistle will spread to neighboring properties as well. Land managers consider Canada thistle the most difficult thistle to control.

Is Canada thistle good for anything?

Canada thistle seeds are eaten by songbirds, and sometimes furnishes nesting cover for rails and shorebirds.

How does Canada thistle spread?

Canada thistle is a perennial that reproduces from seed and by extensive roots from which arise aerial shoots. Once Canada thistle becomes established, plants can live and reproduce for many years. Canada thistle is dioecious – male and female flowers are produced on different plants so cross pollination is necessary for seed production.

How can I control Canada thistle?

Controlling small infestations is more effective and less expensive.

Options for [Canada thistle control](#) include:

Mechanical - Cultivation has been used to starve the plant roots by repeatedly destroying new shoots.

Herbicide - Many herbicides are effective in managing Canada thistle. Repeated applications are necessary.

Biological - The stem weevil ([Ceutorhynchus litura](#)) has limited success, used alone will NOT control Canada thistle. Canada thistle rust fungus ([Puccinia punctiformis](#)) has recently been released in Nebraska.

What is a Noxious Weed?

A noxious weed is a nonnative plant, which is known to be invasive and can be directly poisonous to man, livestock, and wildlife. Noxious weeds compete with crops, rangeland and pastures reducing yields substantially.

It is the duty of each person who owns or controls land in Nebraska to effectively control noxious weeds on his/her property. For more information about Nebraska's Noxious Weeds contact your local [Weed Control Superintendent](#)