
Bull Thistle

Cirsium vulgare



The first year's growth is a rosette up to 3" wide on the ground, which then becomes a bushy thistle that grows to 7' tall.

- Leaves are 3-12" long, and hairy on the upper side, wooly underneath, with very sharp spines.
- Stems are hairy and very spiny.
- Flowers are purple, about 2" tall and wide, at the tip of the stems, from June-September.
- Seeds, 100-300 per flower, are dispersed by fluffy plumes and are the only source of this plant's spread.

NOTE: This thistle is **allelopathic**, meaning it produces chemicals that discourage the growth of surrounding plants.



HOW TO CONTROL:

- Bull Thistle does not grow well in the shade.
- Cut 2-4" below ground to prevent root crown re-sprouting. Monitor and repeat.
- Pull or cut before flower head development. Monitor and repeat. Or, clip seed heads and bag for disposal. Mowing is not recommended as it promotes side branching and more flower opportunity.
- Avoid spreading seed by checking clothing if walking in thistle area.
- If necessary, and beyond 25' from water, spot spray on the leaves of the rosette: 3-5% Aminopyralid (Milestone) during spring or fall, or 3-5% Aminopyralid + 2,4-D3 (GrazonNext), 9-12 months after last mowing. Monitor and repeat.

Sources

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[https://wiki.bugwood.org/Archive:BCIPEUS/Cirsium_vulgare](https://wiki.bugwood.org/Archive:BCIPEUS/Cirsium_vulgare;);

Minnesota Wildflowers www.minnesotawildflowers.info/

Controls

<https://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=1738754&DocName=Bullthistle.pdf>;

https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd563016.pdf
