

PNW IPC Invasive Plant Focus for February and March 2008



Botanical Name - *Cirsium arvense* (L.) Scop.

Common Name – Canada Thistle, Creeping Thistle, Californian Thistle

Family – Asteraceae

Duration/ growth form – perennial / forb, herb

Native Range – Eurasia

Description – Up to one meter tall, many stems, lavender, pink or white blooms (1-2 cm). Leaves are alternate and deeply lobed. Long spines on the stems and bracts on the leaves. Roots can grow four to five meters per year laterally and up to one meter deep.

Threats – This thistle has been referred to as one of the world’s worst weeds, displacing native species concurrently impacting animal habitat and diversity. Canada thistle invades pastureland, grassland communities, and croplands, reducing crop yields costing millions annually. It is noted as being allelopathic potentially increasing its competitive potential. The spines and bracts on the stems and leaves restrict grazing in heavily infested sites. Canada thistle found throughout Canada, and in every state except Texas, Oklahoma, and a few other states in the southeast. *Cirsium arvense* is considered a noxious weed in 33 states.

Background – *Cirsium arvense* is believed to be introduced as a crop contaminant by colonist in the 17th century, reaching the west coast by the mid 1800’s.

Biology – Canada thistle flowers from July to September and is dioecious, (male and female plants). The flowers are composed of florets, which are tubular, the fruits are achenes, light brown and 3 mm long. The plant needs full or at least partial sun. The seeds are dispersed by wind and birds, an established infestation can produce up to 250,000 seeds, which can be viable for up to 20 years. This species can reproduce vegetatively, and has a fibrous taproot from which lateral roots spread, and can regenerate from small root fragments.

Take a look at the Plant Assessment Form –

<http://www.cal-ipc.org/ip/inventory/PAF/Cirsium%20arvense.pdf>

Other links for *Cirsium arvense* (Canada thistle)

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=CIAR4>

<http://ucce.ucdavis.edu/datastore/detailreport.cfm?usernumber=29&surveynumber=182>

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/ALIEN/fact/ciar1.htm>

<http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/esadocs/cirsarve.html>

http://www.missouriplants.com/Pinkalt/Cirsium_arvense_page.html

References link