

Invasive Species of Truckee Meadows

Canada Thistle

Cirsium arvense



Identification

Canada Thistle can be identified by its green to brown stem that can grow up to 4ft tall and also by its shiny, alternating leaves that are oblong or lance shaped. Flowers can be pink, purple or white and have a vase-shaped base.

Origin and Spread

C. arvense was originally brought here from Europe where it was called "Creeping thistle" due to its spreading root system. It was brought to the United States by accident in the 1600's and quickly became competition for crops which is why it is now considered a noxious weed.

C. arvense is perennial, meaning it can reproduce by both roots and seed. They are often found in dense colonies due to the extensive root system which can spread up to 12 feet!



Management

Repeated mowing, tillage or hand removal is best done before seed production in order to suppress the spread of Canada thistle. Herbicides can also be effective on growing or flowering plants however, be sure to carefully read the label and ensure they are appropriate for use near water.

Plant These Native Alternatives:



Bigleaf lupine
(*Lupinus polyphyllus*)



Purple sage
(*Salvia dorrii*)



Rocky Mountain beeplant
(*Cleome serrulata*)



Blue Flax
(*Linum lewisii*)

Use this tool to find more native plants:
<https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/>

For more information and resources, check out this link:

