

*Cirsium arvense*

# Canada Thistle

Other common names:  
corn thistle, creeping thistle

Asteraceae, the sunflower family  
Category: CONTAINMENT



## Diagnostic Characteristics

- Erect perennial; grows 1-4 feet tall with extensive creeping roots
- Grooved stems branch only at the top
- Leaves are sessile, alternate, oblong to lanceolate, and deeply divided with spiny margins
- Upper leaf surface is dark green and smooth; lower surface is light green
- Flower heads are purple, numerous, often clustered, urn shaped, and appear on upper stems

## Background

- Native to Eurasia; introduced as a contaminant in crop seed
- Inhabits waste areas, crops, pastures, rangeland, and rights-of-way
- Reproduces vegetatively by creeping roots, root fragments, and seed
- A very aggressive weed that can form dense patches
- Plants are male or female

Photo Credit:

J.M. DiTomaso, The Regents of the University of California

# Canada Thistle

*Cirsium arvense*

