

Bull thistle

Cirsium vulgare

* Compare to other *Cirsium* species and to *Carduus* species

SOMEWHAT INVASIVE – established in the region

Invasive habitat: grows in sunny areas with disturbed soils, such as fields, roadsides, railroads, and hayfields.

Native range: Europe and Asia



Common in the Arrowhead; usually found singly, not in large groups



IDENTIFICATION



Growth form: biennial or short-lived perennial; produces a basal rosette in year one, and bolts 3-6' and flowers in year 2. Branched, winged, prickly stem.



Flowers: deep purple flowers are 1.5" wide and bloom July-August.



Leaves: leaves are coarse, alternate, and lobed. The upper sides are spiny while the lower sides have wooly white hairs. Leaves are spiny.



Seeds: prolific seed production; seeds are wind dispersed.

CONTROL



Manual: pull or dig; dispose of or burn flower heads.



Chemical: Milestone, Transline, and Opensight are very effective, especially prior to bolt.



Prescribed fire: burning may be effective in controlling populations.



Biological: thistlehead-feeding weevils and rosette-feeding weevils are used for control.



Mechanical: repeated mowing can prevent flowering and reduce seed production.



Cultural: restore or reforest sites to provide native competition or shading.