

Invasive Species Fact Sheet-Canada Thistle

Prepared by: Aaron Ide

Species Common Name: Canada Thistle

Species Scientific Name: *Cirsium arvense*

Native Range and Introduction: This species is native to Europe and was introduced in the 1600s. The introduction is believed to be from contaminated seed from Europe. It quickly spread by human activities and contaminated seed. Currently water, animals, contaminated seed, and human activities are the primary vectors of its spread.

Description: Perennial species usually growing to about 40 inches. The plant has dark green leaves with serrate and spine tipped margins. The plant forms a rosette the first year, before producing a flowering head the second. It has a smaller purple to pink flowering head than most other noxious thistles. The flowering head turns to feathery white seeds at maturity that can remain viable for over 20 years. Also, this species can form dense patches quickly with its rhizomatous roots putting up multiple stems.

Ecological and Economical Threats: Ecologically is a hardy invader that will come in and outcompete native vegetation changing the species composition and lowering biodiversity. Economically it affects many crops, especially spring planted varieties, leading to higher input for control and/or lower yields.

Regulated Status in Wyoming: Canada Thistle is on the State Designated Noxious Species List and is also on the North American Invasive Species Management Association Weed Free Forage Noxious Species List that Wyoming uses for weed free forage standards.

Distribution in Wyoming: Found in all counties in Wyoming.

Control Options:

Mechanical: Is not recommended as the plant can resprout from root fragments left in the soil.

Chemical: Most widely used herbicide is Milestone (Aminopyralid), which is great in multiple use sites (Range, Pasture, ROW), others include Curtail (Clopyralid+2,4-D) in grains or Transline (Clopyralid) in lawns. Do not treat while the plant is setting seed as it is dormant during this time.

Cultural: Cultural control could be taking highly infested agricultural fields and returning them to range or pasture for more intense treatment for a period of time.

Biological: Fly, weevil, and beetle species that have been released for control of this species. The stem gall fly is probably the most widely spread, while the stem boring weevil is a more recent released agent against this thistle.

Integrated Weed Management: An integrated plan for Canada Thistle may be following an agricultural field for 12 months, applying Milestone in the fall, then applying a chemical follow treatment in the spring and fall next year with a glyphosate product, before you replant wheat (or other grain) that fall.

Online Resources:

URL: <http://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/13628/aqb>

URL: <https://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/canthistle.shtml>

URL: <http://www.invasiveplantatlas.org/subject.html?sub=2792>

Image 1 URL: <http://www.invasive.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=1196013>

Image 2 URL: <http://www.invasive.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=1196252>



Image 1-Flowering heads, one with mature seed



Image 2-Plant in bud stage

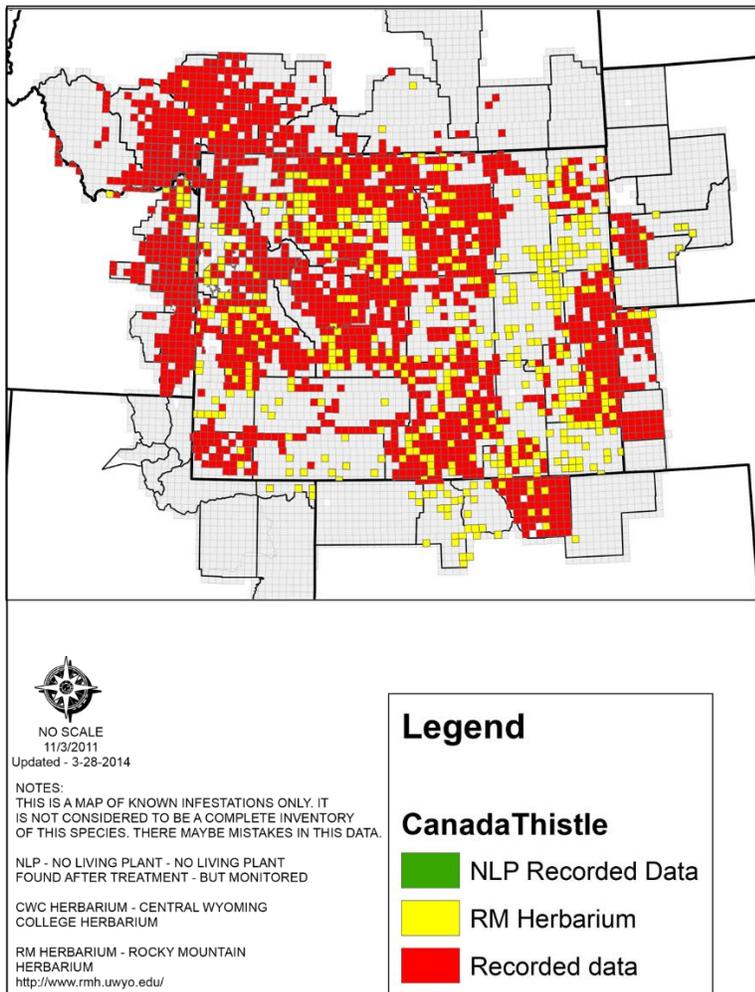


Figure 1-Canada Thistle Distribution in Wyoming and Surrounding States URL:
http://wyoweed.org/images/Weed_Maps/Canada_thistle.pdf