



Weed of The Week

Bull Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)

This week's weed of the week features a big bully in our pastures. Bull Thistle is part of the sunflower family, introduced to the United State during the colonial times and now is widespread throughout the U.S. and Southern Canada. Bull Thistle grows well in pastures, rangeland, roadsides, and fallow fields. This biennial species produced rosette's the first year of growth that grow very low to the ground with hairy leaves with 2-3 spined tipped lobes. The rosette will grow during the wintertime and remain very green. During the second year of growth the plant will grow in heights of 5-6 feet in height. The second year of growth, Bull Thistle will flower and produce seed. Flowering usually begins in late June and continues well into October. One plant will produce 7,000 seeds enabling it to spread very quickly. Seeds are surrounded by a fluffy pappus that aids disbursement by wind. Bull Thistle does not have any toxic qualities but can irritate the mouths of livestock if consumed. Controlling Bull thistle in pastures can be successfully done by mowing just before flowering takes place. Digging up the plant with a shovel can be very effective. Spot treatments with herbicides such as 2-4-D, Crossbow, and chaparral work very good.

