



Weed of The Week

Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)

Don't blame our neighbors to the north for this week weed of the week, even though this weed is called Canada thistle, its origin is from Southeast Eurasia. In the early 1700's this weed was brought to northeast United States through contaminated grain seed and as it is well known to do it spread rapidly throughout the eastern United States and thought to have been established in Ohio in the mid 1800's. Canada Thistle grows very well in cultivated areas such as row crop and forage fields. It can also be found growing in meadows, pastures, and yes, even your garden! Canada Thistle prefers well trained soils with loamy or sandy textures. There are a few key Identifiers of Canada Thistle such as it grooved green stems with multiple branches that can grow to 4 ft in height. Leaves of this plant are alternate and have 1 leaf per node and oblong or egg shaped covered in spines. The underside of the leaves are covered with fine hair. The flower of Canada Thistle is violet in color and one cluster can contain 100 tubular flowers surrounded by bracts or scale like structures. Seeds of this weed are about 3/16 of an inch in size and pepper shaped. Seed are covered with a silky hair structure called pappus that assist in it spread through wind, water, and wildlife. Canada Thistle is considered a noxious weed in Ohio and for good reason, it has an aggressive growth habit and spreads very quickly through seed and a creeping root system called rhizomes. Late May and the first of June is when plants begin to flower and will continue well into the month of July. In one growing season, one Canada Thistle plant can produce up to 1500 seeds. Controlling Canada Thistle should not be rushed, early bud stage is the best time for controlling Canada Thistle through mechanical or chemical means. Tillage should be avoided due to rhizome root systems that are stimulated from cultivation. Glyphosate, Glufosinate work well on Canada Thistle in row crops, for grass-based forages 2-4-D or Triclopyr work very well, as always read the label for harvest restrictions.

