Bull thistle
*Cirsium vulgare*

Recognizing bull thistle
Bull thistle is a biennial herbaceous plant that grows three to seven feet tall with one branched, upright stem. In its first year of growth, it forms a basal rosette, and grows an upright stem and bloom in the second year.

Flowerheads are numerous, and one and a half to two inches in diameter. Bracts at the base of flowerheads are spiny. Flowers are purple or rarely white and bloom July to September. Leaves are alternate and coarsely lobed. Each lobe has a spiny tip, and upper leaf surface is rough with bristle-like spines. Stems are spiny-and-winged.

Why is bull thistle a problem?
Bull thistle outcompetes native plants and desirable wildlife. It invades most disturbed habitats such as pastures, roadsides and ditch banks, and grows in dense thickets. Bull thistle is an economic threat by reducing hay quality.

Controlling noxious weeds on your property is your responsibility and the law.

Chapter 17.10 RCW, County Code Title 7

YOU can help stop the spread of noxious weeds
- Report infestations
- Actively control noxious weeds on your property
- Contact Clark County’s Vegetation Management Program for more information on species ID and recommended control methods
- Spread the word about noxious weeds, and why controlling them is so important

Remember, weeds are everyone’s problem. Controlling noxious weeds on your property is your responsibility and the law.

Online Resources
Clark County Noxious Weed Program
www.clark.wa.gov/weed
Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
www.nwcb.wa.gov
Pacific NW Early Detection Network Mobile App
http://apps.bugwood.org/pnedn.html
Scan this QR code to download

For other formats, contact the Clark County ADA Office:
Voice (360) 397-2322, Relay 711 or (800) 833-6388, Fax (360) 397-6165, E-mail ADA@clark.wa.gov.
Managing weeds with Integrated Weed Management

The most effective way to manage weed infestations is to use a combination of control methods specific to the problem weed, where it is in its growth-cycle, and the location where it is growing. This approach is called integrated weed management, or IWM, which uses biological, mechanical, cultural, and chemical (herbicide) control methods that treat the problem weed yet protect human health, habitat, water, and other natural resources.

Prevention is better than control - The best control method of all is to prevent weeds in the first place. IWM starts with understanding the soil, water, natural resources and human impacts and uses on a site. For example, weeds often invade due to overgrazing, bare soil, or other factors that should be corrected for the control measures to be fully effective.

Long-term effectiveness – A good IWM plan is more effective than complete reliance on herbicide management. While not all control methods are useful for all weed species, taking an integrated approach to weed management can greatly increase the effectiveness of your efforts. As weed control is not a one-time fix, an IWM strategy should be practical, adaptable, cost-efficient, and effective.

### IWM control recommendations for bull thistle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IWM control type</th>
<th>Control method</th>
<th>Effectiveness of control method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Small/backyard site</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical &amp; mechanical</td>
<td>digging</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hand-pulling</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mowing</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>tilling</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bark mulch</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>black plastic</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cover crop</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>native plant restoration</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>soil amendment</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological</td>
<td>managed grazing</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>weed-feeding insects</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical</td>
<td>aminopyralid</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>glyphosate</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>triclopyr amine</td>
<td>●</td>
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</tbody>
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* Brand names are listed as an example only. Other commercial products may contain the listed chemical control. Clark County does not endorse any product or brand name. Always read and follow the herbicide label. For more information on specific herbicides, please contact Vegetation Management.

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### THE WEED CONTROL TOOLBOX

**Physical**
- mowing
- pulling
digging

**Cultural**
- soil amendments
- cover crops
- mulch
- native plants

**Biological**
- managed grazing
- weed-eating insects

**Chemical**
- aminopyralid
- glyphosate
- triclopyr amine

An Integrated Weed Management plan is an ongoing, continuing cycle of weed prevention, control, monitoring, evaluation and planning.