

Thistle control  
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Canada Thistle is a perennial, and can develop a huge root system, growing horizontally as much as 19 feet per season and as deep as 22 feet. (OG July 2000)

Canada Thistle prefers fertile, heavy soil. (Controlling Weeds)

- Dig out before it goes to seed, getting as much of the root system as possible. Let the roots dry thoroughly in the sun before composting them.
- Cut down or hoe new shoots that appear every week or so until they stop resprouting, or (Rodale's Successful Organic Gardening Controlling Weeds)

- Where mowing is not possible, Canada thistle colonies can be controlled by mulching if you use these special techniques:

1. Pull all the stems you can see, or cut low. **Never till as it will cause more thistle.**
2. Use heavy plastic sheeting, old carpet, plywood or another impenetrable material to cover the area, extending several feet beyond the perimeter of the area where the shoots were visible. Cover this barrier with grass clippings, bark, or other mulch if you want.
3. Keep barrier in place for at least 2 years, and pull any shoot that appear around the edges as soon as possible to starve the colony.
4. Keep an eye out for new seedlings and pull or weed out when small

(Organic Gardening July 2000)

- Goats, especially larger males, love thistle and they have successfully been used to control thistle, even Canada thistle.

- There may also be some contact soap type herbicide which would destroy the top part but it would have to be reapplied throughout the summer.

- Biocontrol – beetle <http://www.entomology.wisc.edu/mbcn/weed701.html>

*Hadroplontus litura* (formerly *Ceutorhynchus litura*) is a stem-boring weevil introduced into North America from Europe for the biological control of **Canada thistle** (*Cirsium arvense*), a long-lived perennial weed. The host range of the weevil is restricted to *C. arvense* and some *Carduus* species, although it does not feed on *Carduus nutans* (**musk thistle**).

The first *H. litura* specimens collected from alfalfa fields were found in late August, and were probably newly emerged adults, based on the scale patterns and state of ovarian development, determined through dissection. During a more extensive survey of alfalfa arthropods, *H. litura* was not detected when Canada thistle was absent from the vicinity of the alfalfa.

*H. litura* occurred over a nearly two month period. The greatest numbers of *H. litura* were present in alfalfa fields between 675 and 800 DDU (calculated as  $DDU = [(high\ C - low\ C) - 10]$ , beginning 1 May). This narrow period of occurrence in alfalfa offers a practical way of timing collection efforts.