

# BULL THISTLE

*Cirsium vulgare*

## EARLY DETECTION, RAPID RESPONSE.

Invasive weeds reduce land values, degrade natural areas and once established are very difficult to control. When found, the plants must be removed and the area monitored to prevent future spread. The Invasive Species Program (ISP) is a joint effort between TRCD and NTCD who collaborate with the *Lake Tahoe Basin Weed Coordinating Group (LTBWCG)*, a diverse group of agencies and community members dedicated to preventing and controlling invasive weed species in the Tahoe Basin. An early detection and rapid response network is coordinated by the LTBWCG to ensure that the entire basin is surveyed annually. TRCD offers one-on-one vegetation consultations for homeowners to help identify and control local invasive weed infestations and to find native plant alternatives. By being an extra set of eyes, educated homeowners increase our ability to detect new infestations in Tahoe.

## How did Bull Thistle get here?

Brought to North America during colonial times in contaminated seed, bull thistle spread to the western United States by the late 1800's. It is now widespread and found in every state.



**Origin:** Europe, Asia, and Northern Africa

**Noxious Weed List:** Nevada-NO; California-YES, C-listed

**Habitat:** Open grassland, roadsides, meadows, disturbed areas

**Life Cycle:** Biennial

**Flowering time:** Mid-July to fall

**Spread:** Wind carries thousands of seeds

**Height:** 1-6 ft, commonly 2-3 ft

**Stems:** Spiny and winged—ouch!

**Leaves:** Lance-shaped, very hairy with a sandpaper texture on top and cottony soft underside; prominent veins

**Flowers:** Hourglass-shaped blooms, solitary or in clusters at ends of branches

**Flower color:** Pink to purple



## Why is it a threat to the Tahoe Basin?

- ⊗ Large taproot contributes to soil erosion
- ⊗ Dense infestations crowd out diverse Sierra Nevada native plants
- ⊗ Degrades wildlife habitat—too spiny for animals to eat



## NOXIOUS WEED:

An invasive plant that is difficult to control, aggressive, and intrusive, as well as detrimental to important native species.

### Those listed as C-Listed are:

- Widespread
- Control is at discretion of state quarantine officer
- Not allowed in nurseries

Do Not Disturb!  
TAHOE NATIVE



*Anderson's Thistle*

- ☺ **Flower:** Single, straight broom-shaped blooms at end of stem
- ☺ **Flower color:** Rose red to reddish purple
- ☺ **Stem:** Purplish and thornless
- ☺ **Leaves:** Smooth, divided, and wavy with spiny edges

Call Us!  
NONNATIVE INVASIVE



*Bull Thistle*

- ☹ **Flower:** Single to multiple hourglass-shaped blooms at end of stem
- ☹ **Flower color:** Pink to purple
- ☹ **Stem:** Green and spiny
- ☹ **Leaves:** Sandpaper texture, very hairy, prominent veins

**Think you spotted this invasive weed?**

- 1) Please contact your local Resource Conservation District. In California, call TRCD (530) 543-1501 ext. 113. In Nevada, call NTCD (775) 586-1610 ext. 28.
- 2) A member of the Invasive Species Program (ISP) staff will come identify the plant and record the weed's location to add to our Basin-wide map.
- 3) District staff will work with you to determine the best method of control that fits your property and the invasive weed(s) present. With your permission, the District will monitor the site after control measures are completed to ensure control efforts succeeded.
- 4) At your request, your local RCD also provides native and adapted plant consultations to homeowners free of charge. After evaluating your property, staff can provide plant plans for your yard and accompany you to a local nursery to help pick out native plants that will thrive on and add beauty to your landscape.

