



Tips for Managing Canada Thistle with Herbicide

About Canada Thistle

Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) is a perennial plant with extensive spreading roots that rapidly forms dense colonies. Vegetative shoots arise from adventitious buds located on Canada thistle roots. Canada thistle also spreads by seed; each shoot can produce more than 1,000 seeds. Plants grow from 1 to 4 feet tall and have spiny, lance-shaped leaves. Purple, lavender, or sometimes white flower heads typically appear from June to October.

This noxious weed infests many habitats such as cultivated fields, roadsides and other non-crop areas, wildlands, and rangelands and pastures. It can often be found along stream banks or other waterways.

The best way to control this weed is by applying effective, systemic herbicides. Most other methods of management do not give long-term control or kill the deep roots. Research has shown that Milestone® herbicide provides superior control of Canada thistle when compared with other herbicides.

Treatment recommendations and data summary

Apply Milestone at 5 to 7 fl oz per acre either in the spring after all plants have fully emerged (some may be budding) until the oldest plants are in full flower stage.

Figure 1 shows the summary of 36 research locations throughout the United States comparing control with common herbicides. Milestone at the labeled rates of 5 and 7 fl oz/A provides 85 and 91% control respectively the year following treatment.



Canada thistle plants have extensive spreading roots that rapidly form dense colonies. Photo by Dr. Phil Westra, Colorado State University.



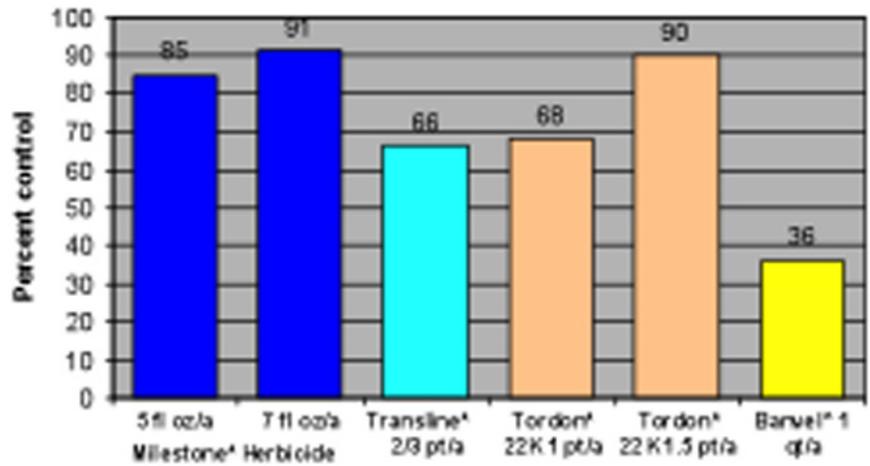
Too early to treat - wait until early emerging plants are in the bud stage.

Additional work was established to look at later application timings (Figure 2). Good control is obtained up to the full flower stage but decreases at the fuzz stage when many blooms are setting seed (see photo in graph below).

Benefits of Canada Thistle Control with Milestone®

Canada thistle can impact desirable grasses and forbs and form dense monocultures. Successful control with Milestone herbicide can result in increased grass and improved habitat for wildlife that includes increased forage for big game and improved waterfowl nesting areas. Milestone is an excellent herbicide option in natural areas due to very low toxicity to birds, fish, mammals and aquatic invertebrates, and can be applied to seasonably dry wetlands and up to the waters edge.

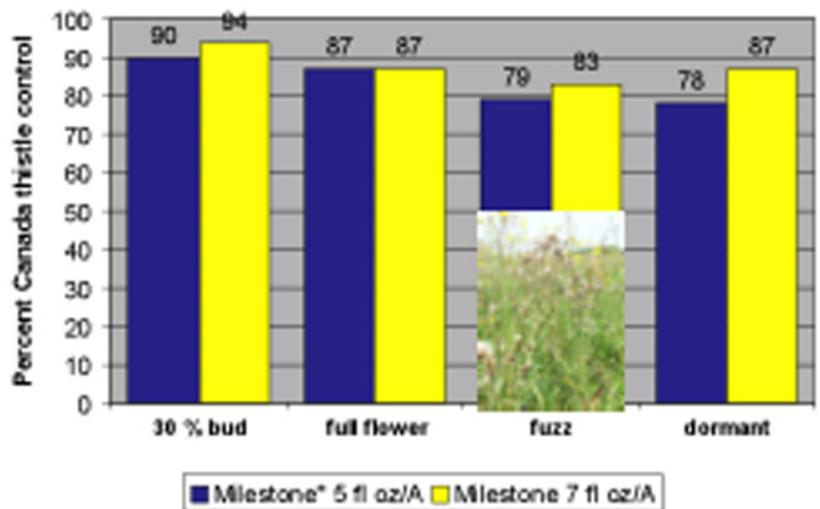
Figure 1: Control of Canada Thistle with Milestone® (Aminopyralid) Pre-bud Applications Evaluated 1 Year After Treatment



Average of 38 trials (CO, NH, MT, ND, SD, NE, OR, VA, SD, OR, WA, and WY)

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Figure 2: Control of Canada Thistle at 4 Applications Times Evaluated 1 Year After Application (2 locations SD/MN)



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This graph summarizes the percent canopy cover of grass at a North Dakota State University research location. The baseline data shows a very similar composition before treatment for treated and untreated. 10 MAT (months after treatment), the grass response was outstanding (an increase of 46% grass cover compared to untreated plots).

