

KEY
CHARACTERISTICS

growth Rosette forming, tap rooted perennial. Rosettes often reach a diameter of 60 cm the first spring; up to 2 m at maturity.

flower Heads 1-few, hemispheric to bell-shaped, +/- loosely covered with cobwebby hairs, and with at least 1 bract-like leaf just below. 3.5-5 cm wide; 2.5-5 cm long.

Petals purple, 25-35 mm long, lobes mostly 5-8 mm long.

Phyllaries 2.5-4 cm long, lanceolate to linear, spreading to reflexed. Bract spines 1-5 mm long, yellowish.

stems With spiny wings and many spreading branches, occasionally a single stem.

leaves Elliptic to oblanceolate, 10-40 cm long. Margins +/- deeply coarse-lobed and toothed, with main prickles ~ 5-15 mm long.

Stem leaves smaller, more deeply lobed and more spiny than rosette leaves. Upper surfaces green, evenly covered with stiff, sharp-pointed hairs, 1 mm long, sometimes sparsely cobwebby. Lower surfaces +/- covered with cobwebby hairs.

Leaf bases extend nearly all the way down stem internodes, as conspicuous prickly wings.

fruit Achenes, 0.15 cm long, with a long, hairy plume that is easily detached. Bull thistle seeds are equipped with a feathery pappus.



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Elevation:
Up to 9000 feet

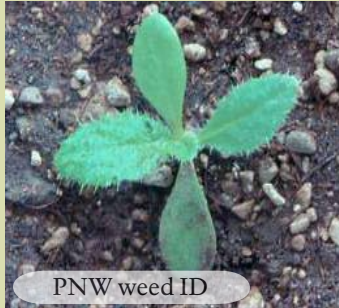
Ecotypes Invaded:
Freshwater systems, montane wetlands, montane riparian & montane conifer forests.

ECOLOGY & DISTRIBUTION

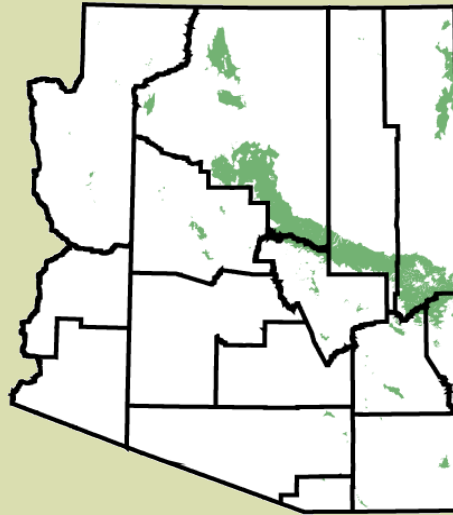
Bull thistle can invade almost any type of disturbed area. It is common in pastures and rangeland, overgrazed rangelands, forest clearcuts, riparian areas, waste places and along roads, ditches, and fences.

Plants can form dense thickets, displacing other vegetation.

Due to the spiny nature of the plant, Bull thistle is unpalatable to livestock and wildlife.



SUITABLE HABITAT



Suitable habitat based on the Arizona Wildlands Invasive Plant Working Group (AZ-WIPWG) assessment. Green = suitable habitat; White = unsuitable habitat; Gray = unknown. Based on Brown, Lowe & Pase (1980) vegetation communities.

