

## **A Message from the Environmental Advisory Council**

**By: Nora Sadler, Member**

Invasive plants are non-native plants that can spread rapidly by several means including seed, vegetative growth, and underground roots. They outcompete native plants by taking over available space, absorbing sunlight or shading, using nutrients efficiently, and sometimes changing the soil chemistry. Although they may provide nectar and/or food for insects and birds, they do not support the total life cycle and relationships of insects and birds that are important for a healthy ecology.

Periodically we will profile an invasive plant starting with Canada Thistle, *Cirsium arvense*. Canada Thistle is native to Europe. It is a prolific seed producer and spreads by underground roots. These roots can go down 6' and spread horizontally 10 - 12'. The leaves have spines, it flowers in June and soon produces seeds.

Control of this plant is difficult, especially on a well-established stand. Knowing the ability of the root system to regenerate if even a small piece is left behind when digging, makes digging particularly ineffective if there is a large stand of Canada Thistle. The root is brittle and breaks easily, also adding to the difficulty when trying to eradicate this plant. If one chooses digging to control this plant, perseverance is essential. The same outcome can happen when trying to smother the plant. If it is a young plant or just a few plants the chance of success with these methods will improve.

If there is a large stand of Canada Thistle, mowing when it is in flower and preventing seed spread should be emphasized. It may never be eradicated, but it can be kept from spreading.

There are chemical means that can be used on Canada Thistle, including Stinger and Clean Slate. Early detection is the best way to control Canada Thistle. When I come across any on my property, I cut the stem to the ground and use a dauber filled with 50% glyphosate ( Round Up ), 50% water and a blue dye so I know what I have treated, and tap the tip on the cut stem several times. This has been very effective for me and is a precise way of using a chemical.









KILL BUCKTHORN  
and stop regrowth

**Play  
Clean  
Go**

**WORK.CLEAN.GO.**  
[PlayCleanGo.org](http://PlayCleanGo.org)

Eliminates spill risk of an open  
container and harmful drift of  
spray application.