

## ***SHATTERCANE*** (*Sorghum bicolor*)



Description: Warm-season annual, reproducing by seed. Root system fibrous. Stems erect, smooth, 4 to 8 feet tall with tillers readily produced from crown. Leaves resemble those of forage sorghum with a pronounced whitish-green mid-vein. Seed heads resemble forage sorghum but seeds appear dark red to black when mature. Seeds “shatter”, or drop easily at maturity.

Thistles, Johnsongrass, and shattercane have been declared prohibited noxious weeds in Maryland. These weeds must be controlled by anyone owning or managing land within the State. Once the plants have matured, seeds from these noxious weeds are transported by wind, water, and man. These weeds threaten the productive land of farmers and cause unsightly and unwanted problems in lawns and gardens of homeowners.

General control practices include mowing, cultivation, and/or treatment with approved herbicide.

For further information concerning the Maryland Noxious Weed Law and/or acceptable control practices, please contact:

In cooperation with:  
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
PLANT PROTECTION AND WEED MANAGEMENT SECTION  
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Annapolis, MD 21401  
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Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., *Governor*  
Michael S. Steele, *Lt. Governor*  
Lewis R. Riley, *Secretary of Agriculture*  
John R. Brooks, DVM, *Deputy Secretary*

MDA 318-02

# MARYLAND NOXIOUS WEED I.D.

**JOHNSONGRASS**  
**SHATTERCANE**  
**CANADA THISTLE**  
**MUSK THISTLE**  
**PLUMELESS THISTLE**  
**BULL THISTLE**



## ***JOHNSONGRASS*** (*Sorghum halepense*)



Description: Perennial, reproducing by large creeping rhizomes and seeds. Stems erect, stout, from 1½ to 7 feet tall or more. Usually forms dense stands. Leaves alternate, simple, smooth, 6 to 20 inches long, and ½ to 1½ inches wide. Seed head with broad, open panicle. Seed generally turns reddish-brown or darker when mature.

***CANADA THISTLE***  
(*Cirsium arvense*)



courtesy Wisconsin State Herbarium  
photographer: Merel R. Black

Description: Perennial up to five feet, reproduction primarily by extensive creeping rhizomes but also by seed. Stems erect, grooved, with branching near top of plant. Leaves oblong, lance shaped, often with spiny margins. Flowers compact, numerous, and small,  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in diameter - light lavender to rose color. Male and female flowers produced on separate plants. Blooms late May to late June with flowering recurring later in season through September.

***BULL THISTLE***  
(*Cirsium vulgare*)



Description: Biennial, reproducing by seeds. Taproot fleshy. Rosette leaves are woolly and grayish. Stem is branched and hairy, two to five tall or more. Leaves extend down the stem in spiny wings. Leaves deeply cut or lobed with sharp, long, apical spines. Upper leaf surface has short stiff hairs. Mature plant typically resembles a Christmas tree form. Flower heads are compact, 1 to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, rose to purple in color. Blooms from July to September.

***PLUMELESS THISTLE***  
(*Carduus acanthoides*)



Description: Biennial (sometimes annual) up to six feet tall, reproducing by seed only. Very similar to musk thistle except underside of leaf has compact hairs, and leaves more narrow and deeply serrated. Flowers globe shaped, erect, single or clustered, with spiny wings to base. Flowers much smaller than musk thistle,  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 inch in diameter, reddish purple. Blooms from May to July.

***MUSK THISTLE***  
(*Carduus nutans*)



Description: Biennial (sometimes annual) up to eight feet tall, reproducing by seed only. Taproot large, fleshy, and hollow near soil surface. Stems tall, erect, and spiny, with spiny wings, lower portion branched. Leaves alternate, coarsely toothed, with prominent yellow spines. Flowers are large (as much as 2 in. across) on ends of long, nearly-naked stems, frequently drooping or nodding, purple to lavender. Bloom is in May or June, followed by seed production.