Utah County Public Works Weed Control Standard Procedure for Canadian Thistle Treatment

1. Herbicide Treatment.

a. Canadian Thistle is a perennial plant that spreads through seed and creeping rootstocks. Herbicide treatment should take place in spring up through fall when Canadian Thistle is actively growing or at the flowering stage of growth. Herbicide treatments should take place preferably before the plant's seed head matures (or "fluffs").
b. Herbicide treatments can be made with:
    i. Glysophate—Non-selective herbicide.
    ii. 2,4-D—Selective herbicide. Kills broadleaf plants but not grasses, if used properly.
    iii. Aminopyralid (Milestone)— Selective herbicide. Kills broadleaf plants but not grasses, if used properly. Utah County Weed Control preferred choice of herbicide for spraying Canadian Thistle.
    iv. There are various other herbicides that can be used to treat Canadian Thistle, but are not used by Utah County Weed Control.
c. Read chosen herbicide label for application rate. Some herbicide labels have specific instructions for Canadian Thistle.
d. A surfactant additive is recommended to be added to herbicide spray mixture.
e. After herbicide application allow the area treated to sit undisturbed for a minimum of two weeks.

Note: The information contained herein represents the standard procedures only for treatment of noxious weeds for Utah County. Utah County does not warrant the procedures contained herein. All legal responsibility for herbicide application is the responsibility of the applicator. If you apply an herbicide, make sure you are not violating any laws and/or restriction specified on the label. If applications are in or around water, verify the herbicide carries an aquatic label. If you have any questions regarding treatment of noxious weeds, please contact your local county public works office or Utah State University Extension office.

2. Additional or Alternative Treatments

a. Biological Agents
    i. Biological agents for Canadian Thistle in Utah:
        1. Hadroplontus litura (stem mining weevil)
        2. Urophora cardui (gall fly)
        3. Puccinia punctiformis (rust bacteria)
    ii. Useful for hard to reach areas
    iii. Helps control or contain infestations
b. Seed head removal
    i. Hand picking of seed heads when seeds are mature
    ii. Last recommended treatment
    iii. Treatment will not kill perennial plant

iv. Prevents seeds from spreading
v. Works for small infestations

Note: An intergraded control effort of more than one treatment type is recommended for thistle control. While biological control is a great tool to combat an infestation, Utah County advises that, if possible, biological control agents be used as an additional tool to help with control efforts of an infestation rather than being the primary or only treatment.
Hand pulling, digging, tilling, and mowing/cutting are not suggested as alternative treatments because Canadian Thistle is a creeping perennial that spreads though creeping rootstocks. These practices are generally not effective treatment for control or containment, but also have the possibility of spreading Canadian Thistle.

3. Repeat Control Efforts

100% control is not expected in one year's time. For control/eradication of an infestation, it will take years of consecutive monitoring and treatments. In general, you should have a decrease of Canadian Thistle every year of treatment, and over time you might eventually accomplish your goal.