

Joe Walter, UF/IFAS Extension Brevard County Agricultural Agent

FS# 7111 AG

## Thistle Control in Pasture

If left uncontrolled, thick thistle stands can reduce grazing and result in less forage production.

A single thistle plant can produce at least 4,000 seeds, which increases the chance for higher thistle populations in the pasture the following year. Consequently, management practices need to be conducted prior to flower formation for effective thistle control. Even if thistles have not infested your pasture in the past, it is ideal that your pastures are scouted in late fall through mid-spring (November to March) to ensure that thistles do not get out of control. New infestations are easier to manage than large-scale populations.

Although there are at several different species of thistle in Florida, most are closely related and control recommendations will not differ. Best time to control with herbicide is when thistles are in the rosette stage. The rosette stage is when the thistle forms a low-growing ring of leaves before the upright seed producing stem is formed. As they mature they are harder to control and may require higher rates of herbicide to have effective control.



Bull Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) Photo by Peripitus (Own work) [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>) or CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

As long as the thistle is in the rosette stage it can effectively be controlled by spraying with 2, 4-D, Remedy, Element 4, PastureGard, or GrazonNext. Once the seed head begins to form a Milestone containing product such GrazonNext is presently the only effective herbicide.

When determining which control products to use it is a good idea to scout the pasture for other problem weeds and then select a product that will control the broadest number of weeds that are present.

---

**REMEMBER: THE LABEL IS THE LAW!** Always read the pesticide label before using. It is everyone's responsibility to protect the environment!

---

If you need help in determining what, when, or how to control pasture weeds contact Joe Walter at 321-633-1702 ext. 234 office, 407-948-8810 cell, or [jwalter@ufl.edu](mailto:jwalter@ufl.edu)

For further information on weed control in pastures see EDIS SS-AGR-08

Weed Management in Pastures and Rangeland

B.A. Sellers and J.A. Ferrell