Creeping Thistle

Habitat Hero





Common Name: Creeping Thistle Irish Name:

Feochadán reatha Scientific Name: Cirsium arvense

Seen in Ireland:

Flower: June – September Fruit: Seeds disperse in Autumn





The Creeping Thistle plant can grow up to 150 cm, in large groups of plants. They have thickened roots that send up several shoots during the growing season.



This wildflower grows in grasslands and waste places. They are visited by lots of insects looking to drink its sweet nectar. During these visits, the insects bring pollen and pollinate the flowers



It grows in almost all soil types, but it likes nutrientrich, deep clay soils that keeps water well best. Photosynthesis is the process in which green plants use sunlight to make their own food.



Creeping thistle overwinters as a root and sprouts again in spring. Creeping thistle seed can stay ready to grow in undisturbed soil for over 20 years

Creeping Thistle Life Cycle



Plants die down to the ground in **winter**, and take a rest, when there is very little energy coming from the sun.





New plants grow from seeds dispersed by the wind and also by spreading roots under the ground.











This wildflower reaches 120cm high during the **summer** months.





In **autumn** the fruits /seeds are held in a feathery structure and are dispersed in the wind or breeze.



The flowers are visited by a variety of insects which pollinate them; this allows seed production.

Creeping Thistle



Some more Facts:

- A very common plant.
- Unlike the other types of thistles, the upright stems are spineless.
- The leaves can be cottony underneath.
- Flowers are lilac coloured (15-25mm across) arranged in fragrant (nice smelling!) clusters.
- Take time to make sure not to confuse this with Marsh Thistle and Slender Thistle; both have spiny stalks so you'll know the difference!
- The Creeping Thistle is one of our most troublesome plants!
- Landowners and farmers often have trouble keeping them off their land.
- This is because the plant can spread just by growing more roots, which then produce shoots, which grow into new plants.
- Also, they are too prickly for most animals to eat! Clever plants!
- DO NOT TOUCH a thistle unless you are wearing rubber gloves!!
- The thistle's sharp needle-like leaves can puncture your skin!







