

## Good bugs like bad weeds

Support for good pollinators, butterflies and bees, can be provided by bad weeds.  
Invasive thistle flowers attract many good bugs.



Aphrodite Fritillary  
Butterfly on invasive  
Musk Thistle.



Skipper Butterfly on  
invasive Bull Thistle.



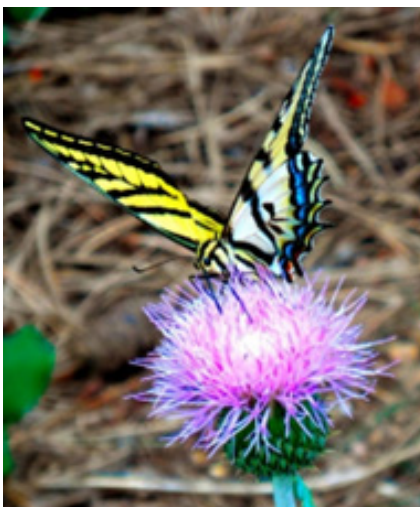
Leafcutter Bee on invasive  
Bull Thistle



Black-notched Bumblebee  
on invasive Bull Thistle.



Native Wavyleaf Thistle that we should protect.



Yellow Swallowtail Butterfly  
on native Wavyleaf Thistle

My one-acre nature preserve has native Wavyleaf Thistles and invasive Canada, Musk, and Bull Thistles. The Bumble Flower Beetle eats seed heads, but it does not distinguish between invasive and native plants. While it does good work suppressing prolific invasives, it can obliterate the less abundant natives.



Bumble Flower Beetle eating invasive Bull Thistle.



Bumble Flower Beetle face

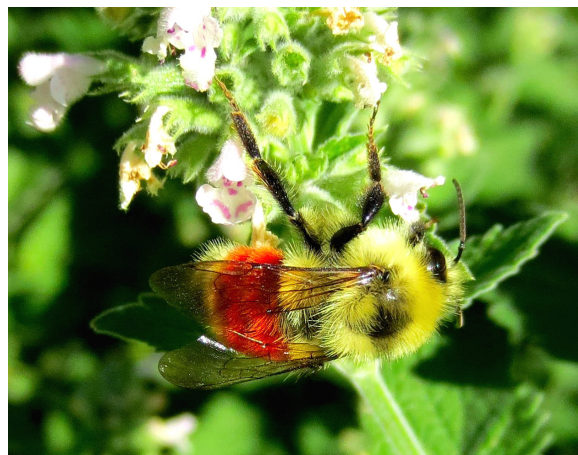
An attempt to compromise support for pollinators with suppression of invasives failed. Juicy flowers fed many varieties of good bugs. Dry flowers were clipped and bagged before seeds could take off on their parachutes. This was difficult work and did not entirely control seeds. The beetle population increased.

On September 2nd Bull Thistles started releasing seeds. To prevent propagation, all the plants were cut and their seedheads were bagged. Next year they will be removed before they produce seed.

Pollinators can still visit a large Catnip colony and other native flowers on my lot.



Honeybee on naturalized Catnip.



Bumblebee on naturalized Catnip (sleeping or intoxicated).



Invasive Bull Thistle seed heads are bagged and sent to landfill.

