Bull thistle        *Cirsium vulgare* (Savi.) Tenore

**Family:** Asteraceae (Composite family)

**Life cycle:** Biennial

**Habitat:** Pastures, roadsides, prairies

**General description:** First year plants form basal rosette up to 2 ft wide; leaves deeply lobed with spine tipped lobes. In second year flower stalk elongates up to 5 ft tall; numerous pink to purple flower heads up to 2 in wide; head surrounded by sharp bracts.

**Key ID traits:** Individual lobes are narrow and tipped with prominent, sharp spine. Leaves hairy on both sides

**Similar species:** Musk and tall thistle are biennial thistles, but leaf characteristics are sufficiently different to simplify ID.

![Spine tipped lobes of bull thistle](image)