

Burdock Fact Sheet

Name: Common Burdock (*Arctium minus*)

Description: Burdock is a tenacious invasive weed with a massive taproot that can grow 2 to 5 feet tall. It is very likely in every Minnesota County.

Flower: One to several short-stalked or stalkless thistle-like flower heads clustered at the tips of branches and arising from the leaf axils. Flowers are ½ to ¾ inch wide, light lavender to deep violet or rarely white, with dark purple-tipped stamens surrounding a white style and extending above the disk flowers. Surrounding the flower is a dense, round array of softly spiny bracts with tiny hooks at the tips.



Leaves and stems: Leaves are alternate, coarse and densely hairy. Basal leaves are broadly heart-shaped with rounded tips, have long hollow stalks, wavy edges, are up to 2 feet long and over a foot wide, becoming smaller, stalkless and less wavy up into the flower clusters. Stems are stout but brittle and green or reddish purple, hairless to sparsely hairy. Leaves are similar in size and shape to rhubarb.



Fruit: Fruit is a head of light brown seeds with a few short bristly hairs attached. The bracts dry to brown and become stiff, the hooks attaching the seed head to clothing, animal fur, and anything that passes by, spreading seed far and wide.



Volunteer Guidelines for Removing Burdock on the Gateway/Brown's Creek State Trails

Safety

- Please wear gloves and eye protection when working with burdock.
- Be aware of your surroundings. The trail may be busy with users. We suggest wearing bright colored clothing to make yourself visible.

Treatment Options

- Shovel: Using a clean shovel, cut the taproot right below the ground surface.
- Pulling: Attempt to hand pull the plant. This may be difficult with the deep root system.
- Parsnip Predator: Purchase this specialized tool intended for removing tap-rooted weeds. Place the blade on the ground about an inch from the base of the plant. Push the blade into the ground at a slight angle, severing the upper portion of the root crown.
- Do NOT leave holes along the trail that could be tripping hazards.

Cleanup

- Leave all plants off to the side of the trail, far enough to not impact use of the trail surface. Keep discarded burdock in areas with existing burdock to prevent further spread.

Tracking

- Please track your time and submit to David Olsen (david.olsen@state.mn.us) at the end of the growing season.