

## Bull Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)



### MEDITATION

Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. Psalm 119:18

The Bull Thistle is considered an alien and invasive plant by some people and a symbol of national pride and heraldry by others. What are the reasons behind the different points of view? We sometimes respond to people and nations in very limited ways. Would our actions be different if we had more information or looked at them from more points of view? How can we open our eyes?

Dear Heavenly Father: Open my eyes to see your world and the people in it as the wonders of your creation. Help me to keep an open mind so that I can reach out to others and care for them and your world in the best possible ways. In Jesus name, Amen

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AND DO

- Find a comfortable spot to sit and reflect near a thistle plant. Think about it from different points of view. Different views of thistles are held by animals and people. What “hat” will you wear? (Botanist, farmer, landscaper, artist, insect, bird, etc.)
- Use all of your senses to observe the plant.

### VISION

What shapes and colors do you see?

Look at the rosette in the one-year plant. Compare it to mandalas in adult stress-reducing coloring books

Photograph or sketch the rosette. Turn it into a coloring book page.



Look at parts of the plant as if you were an illustrator for a scientific publication.

Make an accurate lab drawing.

What words will you need to identify and label parts of the plant?

Use existing field guides to find descriptive words.

Make a word find using all the words that relate to the plant.

How was the thistle design used in Scottish heraldry and why?

What insects come to the plant? How do they use it?

Butterflies—host plant for caterpillars

Nectar source

Bees—What kinds? Nectar? Pollen? Other insects?

Birds--Goldfinch is known as a “thistle bird.” It uses the down to line its nest and seeds for food.

#### TOUCH

Feel the softness of the down. Imagine being a baby bird nestled in it.

Feel the sharp spines. How do they help to protect the plant?

#### TASTE:

Some wild food sources list the midrib of the leaf as an edible vegetable, but very labor intensive to cut off all of the spines. Taste it. Could this be a survival food if you were stranded in a remote place?

LISTEN: There may just be “sounds of silence” but there may be sounds of insects or birds using the plant.

SMELL: Does any part of the plant give off a smell?

Some sources identify the plant as INVASIVE!

How do farmers and weed removal firms or producers of chemicals see it?

What means of eradication are suggested?

What are the pros and cons of chemical vs. manual removal?

How will you keep the seeds from spreading?