



Very Common



Very Rare



Native



Introduced

Cirsium (Thistles)

Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)



Flowering heads **lilac**

Leaves **pale green**, deeply pinnate and very prickly on **margins**



Can grow up to 100cm in height, but is quite **dainty** compared to other thistles.

Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)



Flowering heads **large and vibrant purple** with **strong spines underneath**

Large basal rosette and leaves ending in **thick prickles**



Can grow up to 150cm metres and is a very **robust** plant.

Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*)



Flowering heads **clustered** together and **deep purple**.

Leaves often with **dark purple** colourations at **margins**



Can grow up to 140cm

Plant is relatively robust and **very prickly**.

Meadow Thistle (*Cirsium dissectum*)



Flowering heads **solitary, large, vibrant purple** and on **long stems**

Leaves most basal and **not** very prickly



Can grow up to 60cm.

Plant has long stems and is rather delicate for a thistle.

Melancholy Thistle (*Cirsium heterophyllum*)



An overall larger version of Meadow Thistle (*Cirsium dissectum*) and can grow up to 160cm in height. The plant is very rare in Ireland.