

Biological Weed Control

Since 1995, most of the Custer County Conservation Districts resources have been directed toward biological weed control, focusing on Canada thistle. The district released *Ceuthorrhynchus litura*, (thistle stem mining weevil), and *Urophora cardui*, (thistle gall fly), on 17 sites in Custer County. Either species can be used alone, but seem to be much more effective when used together. Through the districts research a second year release has been found to be the most beneficial. Monitoring has shown all sites have 55 to 95 percent reduction in thistle population in three to five years, with increases in native vegetation.

Grant funds from several sources assisted with funding the purchase of the insects. The success with noxious weed control could never have been achieved without the partnerships involved. Those partners are: Custer County landowners, Custer State Park, SD Game, Fish & Parks, SD School & Public Lands, the Forest Service and Custer County Weed & Pest. The Custer County Conservation District will continue to seek funding that will assist with our efforts to control Canada thistle.

Thistle Gall Fly & Damage



Thistle Stem Mining Weevil & Damage

