

Common burdock



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[*Arctium minus* (Hill) Bernh.]

Common burdock is a taprooted biennial that only reproduces by seed. The first year plant forms large heart-shaped leaves which look similar to rhubarb. The plant bolts in the second season and can grow 3 to more than 6 feet tall. The leaves are dark green above and whitish green and wooly-hairy below with toothed margins. Flowers are pink, purple or white and about 0.75 inch across. Flower heads are enclosed in a prickly bur that has numerous wooly bracts, tipped with hooked spines.

Common burdock is native to Europe but now is found throughout North America. The plant is often found in partially shaded wet areas, along roadsides and ditch banks. The plant spreads by seeds that are found within the burs that cling to hair, fur and clothing. The plant is an alternate host to powdery mildew and root-rot that can spread to commercial crops. The burs can cause eye disease, mouth sores and skin infections of animals.

