

Mason County Noxious Weed Control

Carrot Family

Poison Hemlock

Conium maculatum

Identification Tips

- White umbrella shaped flower (umbel), 4 to 8 inches across.
- Spends first year as rosette, flowers during second year.
- Grows up to 12 feet tall.
- Leaves are green, dissected and fern like.
- Hollow stems are green with red to purple blotching and hairless.
- Seeds are green with ridges when young, turning brown when mature.



Regulated Class B Noxious Weed: Control Required

Biology

- Herbaceous biennial.
- Reproduces by seed, producing up to 40,000 seeds per plant.
- Seeds do not require dormant period and can germinate throughout the growing season.
- Seeds remain viable in soil for up to 6 years.

Impacts

- **All parts of the plant are toxic to humans and animals, causing respiratory paralysis and death.**
- Causes birth defects in livestock if consumed during gestation.
- Invades pastures and disturbed areas, out-competing native plants and pasture grasses.
- Poses economic threat to farmers and ranchers.
- Plants remain toxic up to three years after dried.



Distribution

- Native to Europe and North Africa.
- Can be found along roadsides, in ditches, fields, pastures, vacant lots and unmanaged yards.
- Does best in sunny locations with moist soil but can grow in drier, shadier conditions.
- It has been found at a few locations in Mason County.

Look for red-purple blotching and lack of hair on stems to distinguish poison hemlock from other members of the carrot family.

QUESTIONS? Contact Mason County Noxious Weed Control at:

(360) 427-9670 ext. 592 or patriciag@co.mason.wa.us

<https://extension.wsu.edu/mason/natural-resources/noxious-weed-program/>

What You Can Do

Control of poison hemlock is a legal requirement in Mason County. It is not yet widespread in the county. Help stop the spread of this toxic noxious weed. Check your property and nearby roads regularly for flowering plants. By stopping seed production and eliminating existing plants, we can keep this toxic plant from harming animals and humans. Contact the Mason County Noxious Weed Control Board if you see poison hemlock in Mason County.

Control Methods

Survey your yard and surrounding areas for poison hemlock. Choose control methods that are best suited to your site, taking into account site ecology and size of infestation. **Always wear gloves when handling poison hemlock.** After removal, sites must be monitored for several years for new plants. **Contact Mason County Noxious Weed Control for more information.**

Prevention

Do not plant or transport poison hemlock. Inspect recently purchased soil and gravel for seedlings and pull when found. Clean clothes, animals and equipment that have traveled through infested areas. Cleared areas should be reseeded to add competition. Survey your yard and neighboring properties for poison hemlock. Initiate control or report infestation when found. **EDRR is key in eradicating this toxic weed from Mason County.**

Manual Control

Small sites can easily be controlled by digging or pulling. **Wear gloves, safety glasses and protective clothing** to avoid contact with toxins and **wash hands thoroughly after handling plants.** For effective control, take care to remove entire root. This often

requires hand tools or a shovel. Deadhead flowers, bag any plant material and place in garbage. **Do not compost plant material**, as poison hemlock will remain toxic up to 3 years after dried and seeds may mature even after pulled.

Don't confuse with other Noxious Weeds in the Carrot Family



Queen Ann's lace
(*Daucus carota*)
Class C

Queen Ann's lace or wild carrot has finely dissected leaves and hairy stems with no red-purple blotching. White umbel will sometimes have a deep red flower in the center. Grows 1-4 ft. tall.



Wild Chervil
(*Anthriscus sylvestris*)
Class B-Designate

Wild chervil is becoming a more common site in Mason County. The stems are hollow with distinct ridges, lower portion of stem is hairy, while upper portion of stem is smooth.

Mechanical

Mowing and cutting are not effective methods for control of poison hemlock and will only delay plants from flowering. Plants will quickly resprout and flower. Wear dust mask while cutting to protect yourself from inhaling toxins. After clearing an area you should apply a layer of mulch, replant, or reseed. This helps to reduce poison hemlock germination.

Chemical

Choose a formulation that is appropriate for your site. Follow the label exactly as written and use only at rate prescribed. Do not apply herbicide over or near water bodies. Remove livestock and follow grazing restrictions.

Chemical control is considered to be the most effective method for controlling large infestations. A product containing triclopyr, glyphosate, or imazapyr is recommended to control poison hemlock. A selective herbicide such as triclopyr will only affect broadleaf plants and will not injure grasses or pasture crops. Non-selective herbicides, containing glyphosate or imazapyr, will damage all plant species, including grasses. Treat poison hemlock during the spring, while plant is still in rosette form.

Contact the Mason County Noxious Weed Control Board with questions about herbicide application.

