

Poison hemlock

*Conium maculatum***Description:**

Poison hemlock is a member of the parsnip or carrot family (umbelliferae). This species is a biennial, producing large rosette leaves during the first year of growth. During the second year the plant may grow to a height of up to 12 feet. Except for its size, it closely resembles wild carrot, a common plant found throughout Thurston County. Poison hemlock has hollow hairless stems (leaf cane) with purple blotches. Poison hemlock is a biennial, reproducing by seeds only. Leaves are fern like and up to 1 1/2 feet long. The flowers are white and develop into green, ridged seed capsules that eventually turn brown. Seed viability is up to 6 years.

Impacts:

The entire plant is toxic to humans and animals. It contains the poisonous alkaloid coniine and other alkaloids. Most poisoning occurs because the leaves are mistaken for parsley, the roots for parsnip and the seeds for anise. Poisoning of humans have occurred after the ingestion of seeds, leaves and roots and even as a result of blowing through the hollow stems when used as whistles or peashooters. The seeds, however, are the most toxic part of the plant. "Poison hemlock remains toxic for several years after being pulled, and it is wise not to leave the dead plants where they might be eaten by wildlife or children" (Parsons 1973).

**Control Options:**

Thurston County's Integrated Pest Management emphasizes cultural, biological, and manual control methods to keep pests and vegetation problems low enough to prevent damage. The goal of Thurston County's pesticide use policy is to minimize the use of pesticides by utilizing and providing information about the most effective control options that are available and practical.



Conium maculatum L.

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► Manual Techniques

Hand removal is recommended for small infestations. When pulling the plants, dig down and remove the entire taproot. Be sure to wear gloves and to wash your hands after working with poison hemlock. Manual control efforts can be successful, but we have found that the disturbance of soil resulting from manual removal methods encourages germination of seeds at infested sites. Solid carpets of hemlock seedlings are not uncommon. Cutting the poison hemlock is an ineffective option for control, since the plants do not die and re-growth will occur, plants send up new seed stalks in the same season the cutting occurs.

► Cultural Control

Follow-up planting of any bare or disturbed area is recommended to provide competition with hemlock seedlings that will emerge from the seed bank in the soil at infestation sites.

► Chemical

There are two herbicides that can be used to control Poison hemlock they are both non-selective chemicals and kill nearly all types of plants.

Glyphosate is a non-selective active ingredient found in a number of products (like RoundUp Pro® , with 41% glyphosate) that are effective in controlling hemlock.

Glyphosate products can be used to treat individual plants or small patches, either by spot foliar application, or by stem injection (instructions from supplemental labeling in table below).

Glyphosate will not prevent future hemlock seed germination or prevent the growth of more desirable species.

Products with an initial glyphosate concentration of 40% or greater should be mixed to a 2% product spray solution (this excludes pre-mixed/ready-to-use products).

- **Spot applications** means the herbicide is applied only to the target plants and not on the surrounding plants. Spray each plant thoroughly on the stems and leaves enough to be wet but not dripping.
- **Cut stem applications** with RoundUp Pro: Mark each plant when injecting it, to avoid retreating the same plant. Inject with a hand-held device into one leaf cane per plant 10 to 12 inches above root crown.

Herbicide & Method	Product Rate	Mix
RoundUp Pro™ Spot/Foliar	2%	To 1 gallon of water add 2.66 oz. RoundUp Pro™, apply to foliage at or beyond bud stage.
RoundUp Pro™ Stem Injection	5%	Use a cavity needle and push it into the stem center and then slowly remove it as 5 ml per stem of a 5% solution of this product is injected into the stem.

Foliar applications of **imazapyr** (Habitat®), (Arsenal®)

Licensed applicators are required to use this product.

Products containing the active ingredient imazapyr, are considered “moderate in hazard” and are also a second choice for chemical control.

- Spot applications with imazapyr products are effective. Spot application means the herbicide is applied only to the plants and not on the surrounding plants. Spray each plant thoroughly on the stems and leaves enough to be wet but not dripping.
- Do not use on lawns, walks, driveways, or similar areas where roots of desirable vegetation may extend and be exposed to potential injury.

Timing

Control of poison hemlock should be performed whenever it is found when the plant is actively growing and prior to seed production. After control measures are performed, monitor the area the following year to check for new plants from existing seed bank.

READ AND FOLLOW ALL LABEL DIRECTIONS AND RESTRICTIONS. Use of brand names does not imply endorsement and is for reference only; other formulations of the same herbicides may be available under other names. Information provided is current as of the date of the fact sheet. Pesticide product registration is renewed annually and product names and formulations may vary from year to year.



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