

WEED NEWSLETTER FOR FEBRUARY 2012

- This is the first of monthly Weed Board Newsletters, sent to anyone who has been involved or interested in noxious weed control in Jefferson County. They will contain good information on weed ID and control, and details of upcoming volunteer events.
- February is the month when the Weed Board adopts the new County Weed List, at the Board Meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 16th. This meeting, and all other Board Meetings, are open to the public and we encourage you all to attend
- The Weed Board, like most public agencies, is under-funded and we **RELY** on volunteers to do their part to help control weed infestations in the county. We are still promoting the Adopt-A-Weed-Patch program, whereby small groups can “adopt” a weed patch near their home, school, office or church and organize a work party two or three times a year or as often as necessary. The Weed Board can help with tools and advice and sometimes with disposal of weeds. Contact us if you would like to form a group. 360-379-5610 ext 205, or edixon@co.jefferson.wa.us.
- Our website is updated frequently—see <http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/WeedBoard/Default.asp> for information on Board Meetings and other Weed Board projects.
- Weed Board staff and Board Members are available to give presentations to garden clubs or other community groups.

Weed of the Month—Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*)

Poison hemlock is a huge problem, especially in Port Townsend. It is a toxic plant and is prevalent in a number of high-use public areas where accidental poisoning could occur. Poisonings are reported in our state every year, when people mistake poison hemlock for some other plant in the parsley family, most of which are edible.



Poison Hemlock in March

It is a biennial that produces a large rosette of leaves the first year and tall flowering stems the second year. It reproduces solely by seed.

Similar plants occur locally. However, poison hemlock has two distinctive features that can help with identification: the stems have purple blotches and the entire plant is completely hairless.



Poison Hemlock in July

All parts of the plant are extremely toxic and can affect livestock or humans. Care should be taken when handling the plant because small amounts of toxin can be absorbed through the skin. Gloves should always be worn. Serious poisoning occurs only when the plant is ingested.

Hand-pulling or digging are the recommended control methods and are better done early in the year when plants are small and the ground is soft. Poison hemlock is up already in Port Townsend and volunteers are urgently needed. Weed Board staff and volunteers will be hand-pulling at Blue Heron

school and Froggy Bottoms wetland every couple of weeks, starting on February 8th and a major weed pull is scheduled at Fort Worden on **Saturday, April 21st**.

If you would like to help with these events please call or email for details, 360-379-5610 ext 205, or edixon@co.jefferson.wa.us.