

WEED NEWSLETTER FOR FEBRUARY 2013

WEED BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION:

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WE'RE MOVING! WSU and the Weed Board are moving the first week of March, from our current location in Port Hadlock to the Cupola House at Point Hudson in Port Townsend. We will be closed from March 1st through March 8th, open again March 11th in the new location. The phone number and email address will remain the same. The new mailing address will be 380 Jefferson Street, Port Townsend, WA 98368.

SPRING is almost here and weeds are already actively growing. Biennial weeds such as poison hemlock and wild chervil are up already and even flowering in some cases! Now is a great time to pull these weeds—the ground is still moist and soft, the weeds come out easily, there is less plant material to dispose of than later in the year, and there are no seeds to worry about.

THE WEED BOARD is still sponsoring the **Adopt-A-Weed-Patch** program. If a small group wants to get together and pull weeds in their neighborhood we will help as much as we can with plant ID, advice, and loaning tools. A group recently formed to pull ivy in Sather Park—many thanks to them ☺

WEED PULLS planned. The Weed Board will be sponsoring several neighborhood weed pulls—at least one each month during the spring and summer. Details will be sent out via this newsletter and the website

NEW WEED LIST APPROVED. At the February 21st meeting, the Weed board approved the 2013 Jefferson County Weed List. This can be seen on the website at

<http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/WeedBoard/pdfs/CountyWeedList2013final.pdf>

WEED BOARD MEMBER NEEDED to represent District 2 (Cape George and Discovery Bay). If you are interested and are actively involved in farming, please contact the Weed Board.

IVY CONTROL TIPS: Ivy, as you all well know, is an exceedingly obnoxious (as well as noxious) weed, that climbs on trees, adding weight, causing branches to break and sometimes causing death of the tree. It takes water and nutrients away from other plants and it is slightly toxic—the sap can sometimes cause blistering and dermatitis. Plus it provides habitat for RATS!!

Ivy has two distinct growth stages. While on the ground the leaves are the typical deeply-lobed ivy leaves seen on the left.



First Growth Stage

When it climbs up onto trees or structures the leaves are a very different shape, glossy and unlobed. The unlobed growth stage produces flowers, followed by clusters of black fruit. Although these two growth stages look so different, they are the same plant.



Second Growth Stage



Ivy Flowers

Ivy removal is difficult and labor intensive but possible and is best done manually. If ivy is growing on the ground, pull or dig the plants, removing all the roots. Fall to spring is the best time for this because the ground is moist. Vines may re-root if left on the ground, so make piles on a tarp or discard with yard waste. For ivy growing on trees, the climbing vines need to be separated from the roots. Ivy can only grow from roots in the soil (it cannot root itself in the tree bark). Cut and remove all vines to a comfortable height around the tree. This will kill the upper vines; they can be pulled off if desired, but they will gradually die if left on the tree. The lower ones need to be pried off the tree and pulled out of the ground. Try to minimize damage to tree bark. Laying out cardboard with a thick covering of mulch can be used to suppress re-growth. Several layers of cardboard should be used, with considerable overlap because ivy will try to grow through the gaps. Six to eight inches of mulch should be placed on top. The covering should be left in place for at least a year and checked frequently for plants escaping around the edge.

Chemical treatment is difficult because spray runs off the waxy surface of the leaves. Call or email the Weed Board if you need herbicide advice.

Weed of the Month--February

POISON HEMLOCK (*Conium maculatum*)

Poison hemlock, (far right), is common in Port Townsend and throughout east Jefferson County.

It is a biennial that produces a large rosette of leaves the first year and tall flowering stems, with distinctive purple blotches (right), the second year. After flowering and setting seed the plants die, although the tall, dry stalks remain. It reproduces solely by seed.



Look-a-likes:

Bur chervil (*Anthriscus caucalis*) grows in damp environments, similar to those occupied by poison hemlock. The plants are very similar, but bur chervil is usually smaller and has a fringe of hairs where the leaf meets the main stem. It is not toxic but is very invasive.



Wild chervil (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) is becoming increasingly common on roadsides in Jefferson County. Also growing in damp environments, it usually has darker, slightly hairy leaves and no purple spots on the stem. Like bur chervil, it is not toxic but is very invasive. Control is required throughout Jefferson County.



WHY BE CONCERNED?

- All parts of the plant are poisonous.
- The toxins are present in dried plants and decompose slowly.
- Affects livestock such as cows, horses, and pigs; pregnant animals may abort or produce offspring with birth defects.
- Poisoning in humans can occur when the plant is confused with other, edible members of the carrot family.
- Invades pastures and riparian areas displacing valuable forage species or native plants.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Avoid introducing soil or gravel from areas known to have poison hemlock.
- Remove seedlings when young because they can usually be pulled easily and they have not had an opportunity to reproduce.
- Wear protective clothing (long sleeves and gloves) when handling poison hemlock and avoid touching the eyes or mouth because small amounts of toxin can be absorbed through the eyes or skin.
- Replant with a desirable (preferably native) plant species, to discourage re-infestation.
- Hand-pulling is the best control method. Try to pull plants BEFORE they make seed, but if plants have seeds handle them very carefully—bag and dispose of them in the trash. Toxic plants may NOT be composted. DO NOT BURN poison hemlock because burning can release toxins into the air.
- Monitor the site for several years; promptly remove new seedlings.

Control of poison hemlock is required throughout Jefferson County.