Description


Wild Chervil

- Biennial or short-lived perennial that grows 2-6 feet tall, drawing strength from a taproot which can be 6 feet long.
- The stems are hollow and distinctly ridged, often with purple coloration towards the base.
- The fern-like leaves are 2-3 pinnate and the outer lobes are pointed.
- The leaves are slightly hairy, especially on the underside and where the leaf stem joins the main stem.
- The small white flowers, which appear in late May or June, are in umbrella-shaped heads.
- Each flower produces 2 joined seeds, about ¼ inch long, that are narrow, smooth and shiny dark brown.

Similar Plants


Bur Chervil

- **Bur chervil *(Anthriscus caucalis)*** resembles wild chervil, but is much smaller, growing only 2 to 3 feet at most, and often sprawls among other plants instead of growing upright. It blooms earlier than wild chervil—March to April.


Wild Carrot

- **Wild carrot**, or **Queen Anne's lace *(Daucus carota)*** is another carrot-family plant that resembles wild chervil. It is extremely common on roadsides throughout the county and can be distinguished by conspicuous hairy bracts underneath the flowers. Wild carrot does not bloom until August.


Poison Hemlock

- **Poison hemlock *(Conium maculatum)*,** is much taller than wild chervil, often growing 10 feet tall at maturity. Its stems are smooth (not ridged) with distinctive purple blotches. Apart from the purple-blotched stems, a key identifying characteristic is that poison hemlock is completely hairless whereas wild chervil has hairs on the underside of the leaves and where the leaf stem joins the main stem.


Poison Hemlock Stem


Rough Chervil

- **Rough chervil (*Chaerophyllum temulum*)** is less common but also occurs in western Washington. Stems have purple spots or blotches like poison-hemlock but stems are also rough and hairy and the plants are shorter, similar to wild chervil in height.

Habitat

- Wild chervil is highly adaptable and can grow in sandy, gravelly, loamy, wet or well-drained areas. Its preference, however, seems to be damp roadsides.
- It can grow well in both sun and shade.
- Like most invasive plants, it prefers disturbed areas.

Reproduction and Spread

- Wild chervil is usually a biennial plant—one that has a two-year life cycle. It normally flowers and sets seed in its second year, after which it dies. Occasionally plants do not flower till their third or fourth year, but plants only bloom once and die after flowering, unless their life cycle is disrupted, eg by mowing.
- Reproduction is mainly by seed, which is produced in large amounts and can be easily spread by birds, water and human activities such as mowing.
- Plants can spread vegetatively (non-sexually) by means of lateral buds around the top of the roots.

Local Distribution

- Wild chervil grows prolifically in the Eaglemount area and on Larson Lake Road and Center Road. Leland Valley and Boulton Roads are also affected. Only one or two sites have been found in Port Townsend.

CONTROL INFORMATION

Integrated Pest Management

- The preferred approach for weed control is Integrated Pest Management (IPM). IPM involves selecting from a range of possible control methods to match the management requirements of each specific site. The goal is to maximize effective control and to minimize negative environmental, economic and social impacts.
- Use a multifaceted and adaptive approach. Select control methods which reflect the available time, funding, and labor of the participants, the land use goals, and the values of the community and landowners. Management will require dedication over a number of years, and should allow for flexibility in method as appropriate.

Planning Considerations

- Survey area for weeds, set priorities and select best control method(s) for the site conditions.
- Small infestations can be effectively hand-pulled or dug. Isolated plants should be carefully removed in order to stop them from infesting a larger area.
- For larger infestations, the strategy will depend on the land use of the site. Specific suggestions are given in a later section.
- Control practices in critical areas should be selected to minimize soil disturbance or efforts should be taken to mitigate or reduce impacts of disturbance. Any disturbed areas need to be stabilized to control erosion and sediment deposition. Minimizing disturbance also avoids creating more opportunities for germination of wild chervil and other weeds.

- If the control site requires extensive clearing or grading, or is located near a shoreline, steep slope, stream, or wetland, contact the Jefferson County Department of Community Development to find out whether or not a permit may be necessary.
- Because wild chervil is a state-listed noxious weed control (both manual and chemical) in critical areas is allowed as long as the landowner consults with the Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board and follows their guidelines.

Early Detection and Prevention

- Look for wild chervil in damp areas along roadsides and in unmaintained urban open space areas and vacant lots.
- Leaves (rosettes) can be seen from early winter onwards and they can be dug or pulled during the winter or early spring.
- Check constantly for new seedlings.
- Do not bring in soil or gravel from areas known to have wild chervil.

Manual

- Young plants can be effectively pulled, especially from loose, moist soils. Try to remove as much root as possible. The use of a trowel or other small hand tool may help.
- It is very difficult to handpull mature plants because the stems break easily making it almost impossible to pull out the root. Mature plants can be dug out with a shovel but this is time-consuming; it is easiest when the soil is moist.
- It is important to remove as much root as possible because root fragments left in the ground may re-sprout.
- Pulled or dug plants left on moist ground can continue to grow. Bag and dispose of plants if possible. Because wild chervil is not toxic it can be added to compost piles, but piles should be checked to ensure that wild chervil is not growing on them and spreading.
- It is preferable to pull or dig plants BEFORE they bloom. However, if they are removed manually when in bloom it is advisable to clip, bag and dispose of the flower heads in the trash. If disposed of otherwise they could potentially produce seed.
- Return to the same location several times each year to remove new plants and continue to monitor the area for at least three years to catch any plants germinating from seeds in the soil.

Mechanical

- Mowing or weed-whacking will NOT eliminate wild chervil. It exacerbates the problem because plants regenerate from the crown after mowing, sending up new shoots that bloom and make seed quickly.
- Mowing just once or twice a year causes plants to become woodier, tougher, longer-lived and harder to control. It effectively turns the plant into a perennial.
- Mowing can also spread seeds and start new infestations.
- However, if a large area of plants are approaching bloom time, mowing to prevent flower and seed production is preferable to no action. Mowing in this situation should be followed up with some other control measure.

- It is possible that repeated mowing throughout the growing season (every 2 to 3 weeks) may reduce the stored food reserves in the root sufficiently to "starve out" the plant.
- Mulching or covering can be used after plants have been mowed or weed-whacked, to prevent re-infestation.
- To mulch an area, first cover the ground with overlapping sections of cardboard, then top with 6 to 8 inches of mulch.
- Because mulching will smother all plants in the area, it should only be used where few or no other desirable species are growing.
- Areas from which weeds have been removed, whether manually or mechanically, should later be replanted with desirable species.

Biological

- Biological control is the deliberate introduction of insects, mammals or other organisms that feed on the target plant. No insect bio-control agents are currently available for wild chervil. It is possible that goats may feed on it but this is not documented.

Chemical

- Effective chemical control of biennial and perennial weeds can be achieved only with ***translocated*** herbicides (ones that move through the plant and kill the roots).
- If desirable grasses or other monocots (sedges, rushes or cattails) are present, use a selective herbicide (one that affects only broadleaved plants), or carefully spot-spray only the wild chervil.
- Herbicides are most effective on actively growing plants in warm, dry weather.
- Herbicides should only be applied at the rates and for the site conditions and/or land usage specified on the label. **Follow all label directions**.
- Treated areas should not be mowed or cut until after the herbicide has had a chance to work. This can be as long as 2-3 weeks.
- It is important to establish new vegetation after treating an area. Follow the label for the timing because some herbicides stay active longer than others.

For questions about herbicide use, and specific herbicide recommendations, contact the Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Program at 360-379-0470 ext 205, or noxiousweeds@co.jefferson.wa.us.

SUMMARY OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Small Infestations in Native and/or Desirable Vegetation

- Small infestations can be effectively and relatively easily hand-pulled or dug in most cases. Plants should be removed before bloom to prevent seed production and spread.
- Pull or dig plants early in the year when plants are small and the soil is moist, removing as much root as possible.
- Dispose of plants safely—do not leave where they can re-grow.
- OR apply appropriate herbicide, trying to target individual wild chervil to avoid injury to other plants.
- Whether manual or chemical control is used, monitor the site throughout the growing season and remove any new plants.

Large Infestations/Monocultures

- If enough labor is available even large infestations can be controlled manually—see guidelines above.
- Mowing is not effective for controlling mature wild chervil. Mowing can stimulate plant growth, causing prolific re-sprouting and flowering. It can also cause the roots to become large, tough and woody, making control difficult.
- If a large area of plants are approaching bloom time, mowing to prevent flower and seed production is preferable to no action. Mowing in this situation should be followed up with some other control measure.
- Covering with cardboard with a layer of organic mulch on top may serve to suppress re-growth after mowing. Or, wait till there are several inches of re-growth, then spray.
- Large infestations can be controlled with an appropriate herbicide, whether previously mowed or not. (See the Chemical section of this BMP)
- Re-plant the area with native plants that will compete with wild chervil.

Riparian and Aquatic Area Control

- Focus on manual removal for small infestations if possible.
- Cutting will not control wild chervil but it can serve in the interim until more effective control measures can be utilized.
- If manual control is not feasible, apply appropriate herbicide, trying to target individual wild chervil to avoid injury to other plants
- When large areas of weeds are removed, the cleared area needs to be replanted with native or non-invasive vegetation and stabilized against erosion.
- **Any herbicide application over or near water can be done only by a specially-licensed applicator using an approved aquatic formulation, and may require a permit from the Washington State Department of Ecology.**

Road Right-of-Way Control

- Dig up small infestations if possible.
- If plants are about to flower, they can be mowed until a more effective control strategy can be used.
- If manual control is not feasible, apply appropriate herbicide, trying to target individual wild chervil to avoid injury to other plants
- If bare spots are left after spraying, replant with low-growing native plants.

References

- Thurston County Noxious Weed Fact Sheet—Wild Chervil. Accessed, January 15th 2013 at http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/tcweeds/weeds/fact-sheets/Wild_Chervil_2011.pdf

This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement PO-00J08601 to Jefferson County Department of Community Development for the Watershed Stewardship Resource Center (now known as Square One). The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

Jefferson County Department of Community Development
SQUARE ONE
Better Building Starts Here.
621 Sheridan St, Port Townsend, WA 98368 | 360.379.4450 | dcd@co.jefferson.wa.us