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Conium maculatum

WA – Class B Noxious Weed, Prohibited Plant List

OR – Class B Noxious Weed

Poison Hemlock

Carrot Fern, Fool's Parsley, Spotted Hemlock

Family: Apiaceae

Origins: Native to Africa, Asia, and Europe. Poison Hemlock is thought to have been introduced to North America in the 1800s as an ornamental.

Range: Found throughout the United States. Heavily distributed west of the Cascade Mountains in Washington and Oregon.

Habitat: Highly adaptable but prefers humus and moisture-rich soil. Often invades roadsides, natural areas, and waste grounds.

Impact: Poison Hemlock is highly toxic; it may cause convulsions, paralysis, and death if ingested. It is particularly noteworthy that there is no known antidote for *Conium maculatum* poisoning. Acute poisoning symptoms can include a depressed central nervous system, weakness, lack of coordination, shallow breathing, and pupil dilation. In addition to ingestion, it may cause contact dermatitis if exposed to bare skin.

Poison Hemlock reproduces by seed and will re-grow if above-ground foliage is cut early in the season. Each plant produces 39,000 seeds, which remain viable in the soil for 2 to 3 years.

Description: Poison Hemlock is a biennial, herbaceous plant that can grow up to 12 feet tall. It grows as a rosette the first year, then bolts and flowers during the second year. Like other carrot family members, the compound flower umbels are made up of small white flowers. Poison Hemlock flower clusters measure 4 to 8 inches across, and bloom from May to August. Hairless seeds are about 2 mm long, and egg-shaped with ridges.

Leaves are fern-like, toothed, and finely divided. Stem leaves are alternately arranged and will gradually reduce in size higher up the stem. The stems of Poison Hemlock are smooth, hollow, hairless, and covered in distinct purple splotches. Plants have a strong mousey odor when disturbed or crushed.

Common Look-Alikes: Wild Carrot, Wild Chervil, Water Hemlock, Giant Hogweed, Cow Parsnip.

* *All parts of Poison Hemlock are highly toxic to humans and animals. If ingested, it can cause convulsions, paralysis, and death. If exposed to bare skin, it can cause severe blistering. Take extra precaution when identifying plants in the carrot/parsley family, many possess toxic properties.*

Integrated Pest Management - Control Methods

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) combines various methods such as mechanical, cultural, biological, and chemical controls to manage pests. IPM offers the possibility of improving the efficiency of pest control while reducing its

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negative environmental impacts. For more information, see the Cowlitz County Noxious Weed's IPM Resources & Strategy Guide or contact your local Noxious Weed Control Board to develop a customized IPM plan.

Non-Herbicide Control

Mechanical (pulling, cutting, digging, etc.)	Digging up the taproot is effective. Mowed or cut plants may resprout and grow new stalks; monitoring is necessary for cut plants, followed by repeat treatment if needed. Do not burn plant debris as toxins can be released. **All parts of the plants are toxic, even after the death of the plant. Always use proper protective gear, avoid contact, and dispose of the plants in the trash.*
Cultural	Applying a layer of cardboard topped with a layer of mulch (after hand weeding an area) can prevent seedling germination. Maintain healthy forage species in pastures
Biological	Biological agents are currently not available for Poison Hemlock in Washington State.

Herbicide Control: Foliar Broadcast Treatment

2,4-D (Many Trade Names)	**Timing:** Apply in seedling to rosette stage of growth. **Remarks:** Annual treatments needed to control seedlings; avoid drift to sensitive crops; do not graze treated area until plants have dried; do not apply near water.
Glyphosate (Rodeo, Killzall, Kleenup, Roundup)	**Timing:** Apply to actively growing plants before they begin to bolt. **Remarks:** Spray complete uniform, coverage but not to the point of runoff; dust on plants may reduce effectiveness; Glyphosate is nonselective, it injures or kills any vegetation it contacts; refer to the label for use in aquatic areas.
Metsulfuron (Escort, MSM)	**Timing:** Apply to actively growing plants. **Remarks:** Do not allow spray to drift to sensitive crops; apply only to pasture, rangeland, and non-crop sites; application sites differ between products; for best results, use a surfactant; do not apply near water.
Aminocyclopyrachlor + chlorsulfuron (Perspective)	**Timing:** Apply to actively growing plants in spring. **Remarks**: Even low rates can kill non-target tree and shrub species, avoid application within a distance equal to the tree height of sensitive species; do not allow spray to drift off-target; can injure grass species; do not apply near water.

Herbicide Control: Stem Injection Treatment

Concentrated Glyphosate (AquaNeat, Rodeo, Roundup Pro Concentrate)	**Timing:** Apply when stalks are large enough to insert the injection needle. **Remarks:** Inject 10-12 inches above root crown; do not exceed the maximum label rate per acre; this method is best for small patches of Poison Hemlock; Glyphosate is nonselective, it injures or kills any vegetation it contacts; use in non-cropland only; do not apply near water.

* Cowlitz County Noxious Weed Control Board does not endorse any product or brand name. Brand names are listed as an example only. Other commercial products may contain the listed active chemical for herbicide control. Always read and follow the safety protocols and rate recommendations on the herbicide label. **The Label is The Law.**

This control sheet includes excerpts from the Written Findings of the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board (WSNWCB), nwcb.wa.gov. Herbicide information from the PNW Weed Management Handbook (ISBN 978-1-931979-22-1) and product labels.