



WILD PARSNIP

Pastinaca sativa

One of Ontario's Most Unwanted Invasive Plants!



Did you know?

Wild Parsnip may have been transported to North America for its edible root; however, touching the sap on the plant can cause severe burns!

Impacts

Similar to Giant Hogweed, Wild Parsnip is also given the name poison parsnip because of the toxic sap that **causes skin burns** if skin exposed to sap is then exposed to direct sunlight. Also, studies have shown that livestock ingesting Wild Parsnip have reduced weight gain and fertility. Dense stands can outcompete native species in an area thus reducing local biodiversity.

Description

- Wild parsnip can grow up to **1.5 m tall**.
- The single stem is narrow and is smooth with few hairs.
- Leaves are mitten shaped that are sharply toothed, and are arranged opposite in pairs.
- **Flower heads** are umbrella shaped and are usually a **yellowish green**.
- Found commonly in disturbed areas like yards, waste dumps, meadows, open fields and roadsides.





Reported sightings in our watershed

Wild Parsnip is scattered throughout the watershed. Large stands are present along the Mad River valley from Creemore downstream to the Minesing Wetlands. It is also present in the Town of Collingwood where town staff are actively controlling populations along trail systems.

What you can do?

- Report sightings and submit a digital photo to <http://www.eddmaps.org/ontario>.
- Stay on trails and stay away from areas infested with Wild Parsnip.
- Remember to clean your shoes after hiking and keep pets on a leash to avoid further spread.

Control methods

- If your property has fewer than 100 plants then manual removal is possible.
- Remember to wear protective clothing! It is important to wear waterproof gloves, long pants/long-sleeved shirts, and eye protection.
- Digging out plant and taproot is the ideal method—DO NOT WEEDWHIP since this sprays sap-filled plant material over anyone in close proximity.
- After removal, remember to wash gloves and dispose of plants in a black plastic bag. Leave the plants in the plastic bag for one week and dispose of in the landfill. Please do not burn or compost the removed plants!
- If there are large infestations then you will probably need a professional exterminator to chemically control it. For permanent removal, this method will probably have to be repeated for several years.

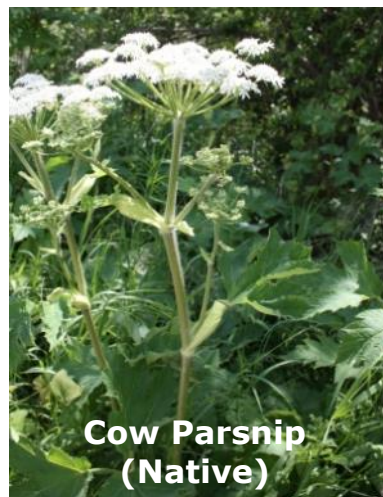
More information

- [Ontario's Invading Species Awareness Program](#)
- [Wild Parsnip Factsheet](#)
- [Wild Parsnip Best Management](#)

Be aware of similar looking species!



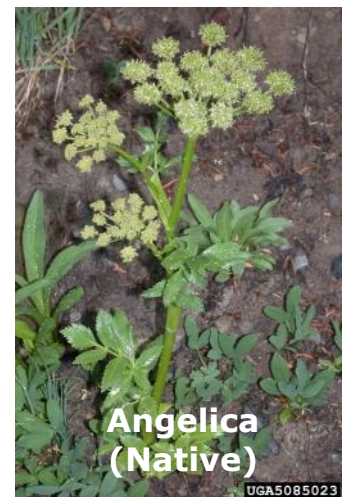
**Giant Hogweed
(Invasive)**



**Cow Parsnip
(Native)**



**Queen Anne's
Lace
(Invasive)**



**Angelica
(Native)**

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