

Wild Chervil

Wild Chervil (Anthriscus sylvestris) is an invasive biennial or short-lived perennial plant of the carrot family. The plant was introduced from Eurasia, and is becoming widely naturalized in eastern Canada where it is a weed of perennial forage crops and pastures. It is a noxious weed in Nova Scotia under the Agricultural Weed Control Act and Weed Control Regulations.

How to Identify Wild Chervil:

A rosette of leaves in its first year, with a flowering stem up to 1.5 meters in later years. Looks similar to Queen Anne's Lace, Caraway, and Sweet Cicely.

Leaves – Pinnately compound, triangular in shape, fern-like in appearance. Leaves alternate along the stem with the base clasping along the stem as well. Slightly hairy underneath.

Stem – Grooved, branched, hollow, curved in small hairs.

Flowers – Small white flowers in large compound umbels, blooming from, late May through July.

Seeds – occur in pairs, greenish brown to dark brown, smooth and shiny, elongated oval in shape. 5-10mm long, up to 1.6mm, cylindrical and tapering to a beak.

Roots – Thick tuberous taproot, extending up to 2 meters deep.

Habitat and Characteristics of Wild Chervil

Grows in a variety of soil types. Prefers wet to moist disturbed sites such as ditches, dykes, roadsides, meadows, pasture, perennial forage fields, stream banks and hedge rows.

Spreads by seed and by root buds at the top of the tap root allowing it to form dense patches.

Aggressively competes for light, space, nutrients and water, often crowding out desirable vegetation, including hay and forage crops. Smothers-out native species and can cause soil erosion.

Sometimes grazed, it has little nutritional value as a forage for livestock. If harvested in forage, it can reduce crop quality due to mold.

Wild Chervil also serves as a host for the parsnip yellow fleck virus, which can infect carrots, celery and parsnips.

Wild Chervil has been identified in Cape Breton, Antigonish, Pictou, Colchester, Cumberland, Hants, Kings, Annapolis, Lunenburg and Yarmouth counties.



How to Remove and Manage Wild Chervil

Caution: Some people may experience a rash from contact with plants in the carrot family. Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Seed spread is primarily due to attachment to machinery, soil movement or as a contaminant in harvested crop. It is difficult to control due to its early flowering, extremely long tap root and tolerance to many herbicides.

Prevention – Eradicate small and young populations by digging up the taproot. Do not harvest hay from areas infested with wild chervil as it can promote seed spread. Clean equipment, clothing, and pets before moving off site to limit the spread.

Mechanical – Use a spaded shovel to cut off or dig up as much of the root as possible, leaving root to dry in the sun. Regrowth may occur from root fragments left behind in soil. Mature plants must be removed below the crown to prevent regrowth the following year.

Cultivation and tillage to disturb the taproot can provide excellent control.

Mow at full bloom and repeat if necessary to prevent seed production. Repeat cuttings (>3) may deplete root reserves. Mowing alone may encourage vegetative spread from root buds. Sites should be monitored and treated until late fall.

Mowing can be enhanced if followed by chemical control methods.

Chemical – Broadcast or spot spray rosettes in early spring when <15 cm. Broadcast or spot spray up to full bloom stage, or spray regrowth after mowing when plant is actively growing again.

Herbicides should be selected based on site characteristics. Non-selective herbicides may kill surrounding desired vegetation. Always consult the label prior to use and consider surrounding habitats and waterways. Follow all label instructions carefully, including personal protective equipment.

Below: Early spring emergence of Wild Chervil in grass stands. Ideal stage for spraying (Early May)



Monitoring – Re-vegetation or grass seeding can be done after treatment and into early fall.

Monitoring of the infested area must be maintained consistently for several years to prevent reinfestation.

Disposal – Chemically treated plants can be left on site to decompose. Bag all pulled plant material, including flower heads, seeds, and taproots. Do not compost or put in yard waste.

Contact:

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