



Photo: Linda Tanner



**WESTERN INVASIVES  
NETWORK**

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\*\*\*\*\*NOXIOUS WEED ALERT\*\*\*\*\*

# Poison Hemlock

Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) is an herbaceous biennial with a fleshy, white taproot. This member of the parsley family can grow up to 10 feet tall. Fern-like, glossy-green leaves are finely divided into leaflets and grow on a smooth, hollow stem with purple blotches. Crushed foliage has a musty odor. Small, 5-petaled, white flowers grow on stalks in 4-inch, umbrella-shaped clusters and bloom from April to July.

## Why is it a problem?

All parts of poison hemlock are highly toxic, including seed heads. It retains toxicity in hay because dead stems remain toxic for up to three years. The acute toxicity of poison hemlock to humans, livestock, and wildlife is fatal. Contact dermatitis can occur if handled without gloves and long-term inhalation of the toxic vapors is poisonous. Poison hemlock is aggressive and easily colonizes pastures, roadsides, riparian corridors, and other disturbed areas.

## What Can You Do?

Poison hemlock can be identified most of the year. Control new infestations as early as possible, in the fall when rosettes have emerged or in early spring. Minimize soil disturbance from vehicles, machinery, and over-grazing to reduce seed germination. Monitor for new plants and re-treat as necessary. Ensure any existing plants do not

produce and release seed. Prevent the additional spread of invasive species by thoroughly cleaning tools, boots, and vehicles after working in or traveling through an infested area.

Small infestations can be dug out. Larger infestations may require herbicide treatment. Please consult with your local SWCD or OSU Extension office and always follow the label.

For more info on poison hemlock:

[ODA Profile](#)

[Columbia Gorge CWMA BMP](#)

Please report this hazardous plant if you observe it in Oregon, but be careful for lookalikes.

## How Do I Report Poison Hemlock?

Report Online at:

<https://oregoninvasiveshotline.org/>

-or-

Call 1-866-INVADER

-or-

Contact [your local CWMA](#)



The flowers of poison hemlock have 5 petals on short stalks arranged in a cluster. (Photo: USDA)



The stem of poison hemlock is smooth and hairless with purple blotches. Wear gloves if handling plant materials. DO NOT burn poison hemlock- the vapors are toxic. (Photo: Troy Abercrombie)