

Subject: Poison Hemlock in Orange County NC

12 June 2023

Attn: Orange County Residents

Poison Hemlock, (*Conium maculatum*) was located growing in Orange County in multiple areas. On Hwy 70 between Efland and Hillsborough, vicinity of Lloyd Farm, Hwy 70A between Churton Rd and Hwy 86 South, Miller Rd, Governor Burke Rd, and in the vicinity of Squires Rd. (See photos attached or click link to see shared drive images.)

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15yOwiGipCAEPMInUtAoN0jFAM0HvnHxV?usp=sharing>

Conium maculatum has multiple common names such as California Fern, Deadly Hemlock, Nebraska Fern, Poison Fool's Parsley, Poison Hemlock, Poison Parsley, Spotted Hemlock, Winter Fern.

Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) is **HIGHLY TOXIC, and MAY BE FATAL IF EATEN!** It is a group 2 toxin which is dangerous but rarely eaten because it is not palatable and it has a bad odor. All parts of the plant are poisonous, with the mature plant and seeds/fruit being more toxic than the other parts. Ingestion can be fatal. The toxin is called Lambda-coniceine (early growth) Coniine, and N-Methyl coniine, conhydrine and pseudoconhydrine. It can lead to Salivation, vomiting, diarrhea, muscular weakness, paralysis, nervousness, trembling, dilation of pupils, weak pulse, convulsions, coma, and death. The toxic alkaloids can cause dermatitis through handling.

Water Hemlock is a bi-annual herb with short tuberous roots and purple-striped or mottled, hollow stems with cross-partitions at the nodes and many of these at the base of the stem. The leaves look fernlike similar to carrot leaves. It can be found Wet meadows, thickets, fresh water swamps, roadside ditches, floodplains, forest or natural area in wet areas, pond, stream, or ditch banks.

In its first year, it will be in the form of a low-growing rosette. Maturing in the second year, it will develop a tall stalk, growing to up to 9'. In ideal planting conditions, the plant can act as a perennial.

The tiny flowers are small, white, and form in umbrella-like clusters. They bloom from spring to fall, attracting a variety of bee, wasp and butterfly species. It is a host plant for the Black swallowtail butterfly. Although all parts of the plant are highly toxic, however, water birds do eat the fruits without effect.

There are look-alike plants that are similar to the white Umbrella head of poison hemlock. Queen Anne's Lace and Elderberry.

If found, please take a photo, of the plant and text me the photo, with the location of the plant, your name and contact number to my cell phone 804-318-7493. I want to map the locations of the poison hemlock within the county.

Poison Hemlock can be controlled using a broad spectrum herbicide like glyphosate or a selective broadleaf herbicide like 2,4-D and dicamba. Once killed, the plant should be burned to prevent it from getting into the landfill or composted (which will spread the seeds).

Please email mart_bumgarner@ncsu.edu if you have any questions. Add subject line: "Poison Hemlock"

Thanks again for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Mart Bumgarner

Mart Bumgarner
OC Crops and Horticulture Agent
(919)245-2062
mart_bumgarner@ncsu.edu

