

Hemlock

Conium maculatum

Family

Apiaceae (umbellifer)

Also known as

Poison hemlock

Where is it originally from?

Europe, Asia, North Africa

What does it look like?

Tall (<2 m) branching, musty-smelling annual or biennial, growing as a large rosette initially, then forming a tall, upright flower stem (<1 m) in its second year of growth. Smooth, hollow, branching, blue-green stems have conspicuous pink or purple blotches. Finely divided, fern-like leaves are dark green on upper surface and grey-green underneath. Small white flowers (Sep-Jan) appear in umbrella-shaped fans at top of stems, and are followed by dark brown, barrel-shaped seed capsules. Plant dies after flowering.

Are there any similar species?

Wild carrot (*Daucus carota*) has a hairy leaf stalk. Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) has yellow flowers and leaves smell of aniseed.

Why is it weedy?

Seeds in soil germinate readily. Very poisonous to stock and to humans.

How does it spread?

Seeds dispersed short distances by wind, and by water, on machinery, clothing or animals, and in gravel or soil. Most seeds emerge as soon as conditions are suitable for germination, although a few may survive in the soil for up to 3 years.

What damage does it do?

Forms large beds of rosettes, crowding out other species

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Roadsides, riverbeds, forest margins, damp or marshy areas, waste areas.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Grub out small infestations: remove all plant material so stock don't eat it.
2. Overall spray: glyphosate (100ml/10L) or metsulfuron 600g/kg (1g/10L) or triclopyr 600EC (50ml/10L). Remove all stock from area as plant material will become more palatable after spraying. Will quickly be succeeded by taller native species so only control in open or sensitive areas.

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Replant with native species to prevent re-establishment. Follow up for seedlings.



www.weedbusters.org.nz



Photo: Trevor James



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