

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

Poison hemlock **WARNING – TOXIC!** (*Conium maculatum*)

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS PLANT?

DESCRIPTION

- Native to Europe, west Asia, and North Africa.
- Biennial; can reach up to 3m tall in second year and emerges very early in the Spring.
- Hairless stems are hollow and green with purplish-red blotching.
- Leaflets are usually alternate though may be opposite higher up the stem.
- Bright green, the triangular leaflets are highly divided, looking almost fern-like, and attach to the stem via a short stalk.
- Growing from branched stems, umbels of small white flowers reach diameters of 1 – 8cm. Flowers are 2mm in diameter and feature five petals and no sepals.
- Taproots often fork and can be 1 - 2cm in diameter.
- The plant features a musty odour, especially when crushed.
- **WARNING:** All plant parts are highly toxic if consumed and can cause swelling and rashes upon contact. It can be easy to confuse this plant with edible species from the carrot family.



Poison hemlock in flower
Photo: BC Government

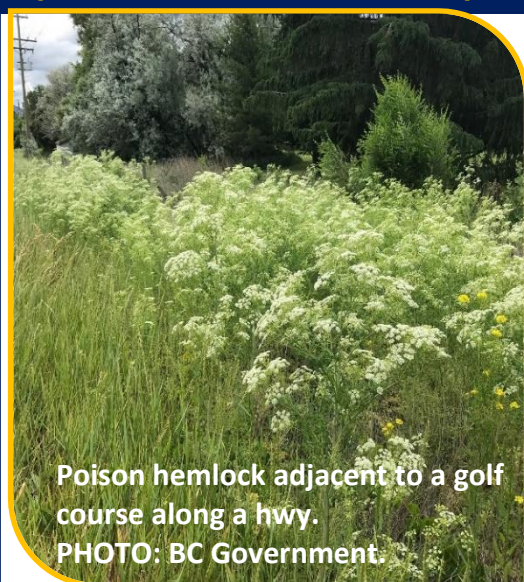
PRIMARY THREATS: All parts of poison hemlock are **highly toxic** to humans, livestock, and wildlife. Ingestion can cause respiratory failure, renal failure, or mortality. Contact with skin/eyes may cause swelling and rashes. Ensure skin is protected in areas the plant may occur.

BIOLOGY & SPREAD

- Prolific seed producer: Can produce over 30,000 viable seeds per plant.
- Reproduction occurs entirely by seed dispersal.
- Seeds remain viable in the soil for up to 6 years.
- Composted and cut/mowed flowers may still produce seeds.
- Majority of seeds drop near the parent plants, however they may also be dispersed by rodents, birds, wind, water, or human activities.
- Majority of longer distance spread in BC appears to be through contaminated materials such as soil, gravel, mulch and hay and via roadside maintenance activities.

For more information:

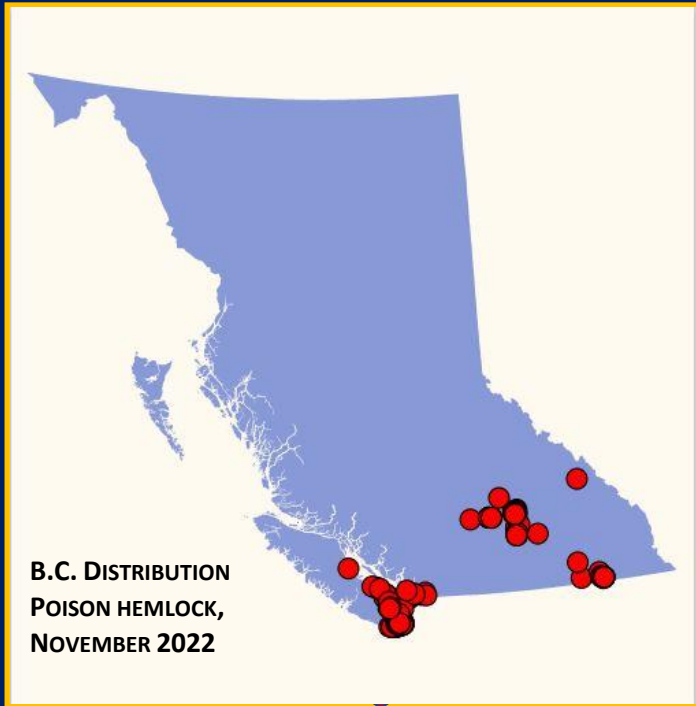
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/invasive-species/priority-species/priority-plants>



Poison hemlock adjacent to a golf course along a hwy.
PHOTO: BC Government.



Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*)



HABITAT

- Poison Hemlock prefers wetlands, riverbanks, railway paths, and roadsides. It can also tolerate grasslands, agricultural lands, and managed forests. While it grows more readily in moist soils, it can tolerate drier conditions and withstand up to 5 months with limited rainfall.

DISTRIBUTION & Status

- Known infestations occur throughout the Southern Interior of BC, the lower mainland, and the southern half of Vancouver Island.
- Management goal is regional containment and reduction in extent. High priority to manage in publicly accessed locations due to the human health risks.



Poison hemlock leaflet
Photo: BC Government



Poison hemlock fruit forming
Photo: Enrico Romani

REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES

Download the App!



www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **REPORT** new sightings
- **Avoid** any contact with skin
- **Warn** other area users if seen
- **Distinguish** from look-a-like carrot family species (eg. wild carrot, wild chervil etc.)
- **Remove** Poison hemlock before disturbing a site with digging, mowers, or machinery

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/invasive-species/priority-species/priority-plants>

