

# WILD CHERVIL

*Anthriscus sylvestris* (L.) Hoffm.

**Family:** *Apiaceaea* (Parsley).

**Other Scientific Names:** None.

**Other Common Names:** None.

**Legal Status:** Regional Noxious: Fraser Valley.



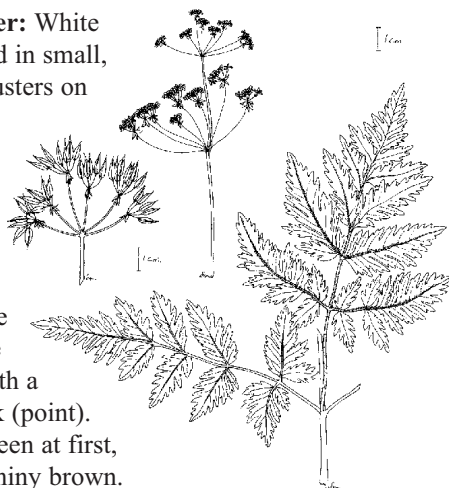
## Identification

**Growth form:** Annual, biennial, or short-lived perennial forb.

**Flower:** White flowers produced in small, umbrella-like clusters on 2-cm-long stalks at the end of the stems.

**Seeds/Fruit:** Each flower produces 2 joined seeds. The narrow seeds are 6–7 mm long with a pronounced beak (point). The seeds are green at first, then mature to shiny brown.

**Leaves:** The basal and stem leaves are



similar: fern-like, triangular in outline, and smooth to softly hairy. Each leaf is divided into smaller leaflets that in turn are also divided. The bases of the leaves clasp the stem.

**Stems:** The branching stems grow 0.3–1.8 m tall (Cranston et al. 2000). The stems are hollow and furrowed and bear a fringe of hairs at the stem nodes.

**Roots:** The thick, tuberous taproots are aggressive and spread rapidly, often extending nearly 2 m in the soil. Roots on mature plants are difficult to remove.

**Seedling:** No information available.

### Similar Species

**Exotics:** Salad chervil (*Anthriscus cerefolium*) is similar but is smaller and aromatic. Bur chervil (*Anthriscus caucalis*) has hairy leaves and seeds covered in short, hooked prickles.

**Natives:** None known.

## Impacts

**Agricultural:** Wild chervil competes with pasture and hay crops, which reduces carrying capacity and forage production. Livestock will graze it when it is immature, but it becomes unpalatable near maturity. It is generally not problematic in cultivated crops, but it acts as a host for a viral disease that infects other plants in the same family, including carrots, parsnips, and celery. It is difficult to control because of its very deep root system and tolerance to herbicides (BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries 1998).

**Ecological:** Wild chervil competes with other plants for light, water, space, and nutrients. It is able to shade out smaller plants because of its tall stature. Since this weed is well adapted to ditches, stream banks, and moist woods, native riparian plant communities are at risk. Wild chervil also grows along roadsides, fencelines, and rights-of-way.

**Human:** This plant is sometimes a component of British wildflower seed mixes.

## Habitat and Ecology

**General requirements:** Wild chervil grows under a range of conditions but thrives in wet to moist disturbed sites, especially where soils are rich. In BC it grows at low- to mid-elevations in fields, pastures, and

edges of woods, and along roadsides and fencelines.

**Distribution:** Wild chervil is spreading rapidly in the Abbotsford-Chilliwack areas of the Fraser Valley (BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries 1998) and

occurs in the province's southeast (Douglas et al. 1998). Recent infestations have been found in northern Washington.

**Historical:** Introduced from Europe, possibly in wildflower mixes.

**Life cycle:** This weed is considered a biennial but can persist as a short-lived perennial by forming sprouts at the side of the taproots. Usually it forms a rosette in the first year and produces seeds in the second year.

## Management

**Biocontrol:** None.

**Mechanical:** Rosettes and immature plants can be controlled by hand-pulling or digging, but mature plants must be removed below the crown to prevent re-sprouting the following year (BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries 1998). Frequent cultivation may prevent establishment. Mowing can deplete food reserves, but it must be done repeatedly before the plant sets seed.

**Fire:** The deep, extensive root system would not be affected by fire.

**Herbicides:** Chemical control is often precluded due to the wet habitat wild chervil prefers. Mowing at pre-bloom and treating regrowth with mecoprop, dicamba, or clopyralid have been effective in Nova Scotia (Darbyshire et al. 1999). Consult the most recent edition of BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Crop Production Guides for specific recommendations. **Before applying herbicides, read the label for full use and precautionary instructions.**

**Cultural/Preventive:** Learn to identify wild chervil

**Mode of reproduction:** By seed and from root buds at the top of the root.

**Seed production:** This weed is a prolific seed producer.

**Seed bank:** No information available.

**Dispersal:** Birds, water, and human activity spread seeds. Mowing after seed-set spreads seeds along roads and rights-of-way.

**Hybridization:** None known.

and take immediate action to control any infestations. Manage infested patches by grubbing out, applying herbicides, or cutting to prevent seed-set. Cut and bag any flowering plants for burning or deep burial. Make sure equipment, vehicles, and footwear are clean before leaving infested sites, and do not move soil from infested sites (BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries 1998).

### Integrated Management Summary

The deep root system and its resistance to herbicides make this weed very difficult to manage. New infestations must be removed immediately before the root systems develop. For established stands, a combination of herbicides with timed mowing or grazing has been effective (NS Department of Agriculture and Fisheries 2001).

## References

BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. 1998. Weed Alert—Wild Chervil.

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Darbyshire, S. J., R. Hoeg, and J. Haverkort. 1999. The biology of Canadian weeds. 111. *Anthriscus sylvestris*. *Canadian Journal of Plant Science* 79: 671—682.

Douglas, G. W., G. B. Straley, D. Meidinger, and J. Pojar, eds. 1998. *Illustrated Flora of British Columbia*. Vol. 1: *Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons (Aceraceae through Asteraceae)*. Province of British Columbia.

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