



EMPLOYEE RIGHT-TO-KNOW

Poisonous and
Hazardous
Plants



ACTIVITIES THAT MAY RESULT IN HAZARDOUS PLANT EXPOSURES

- Burning
- Invasive plant control
- Habitat restoration
- Off-trail work
- Working with equipment or animals that have been off-trail



SPECIES OF INTEREST

Wild Parsnip

Pastinaca sativa L.

- **STATUS**: Invasive plant in MN, present throughout much of the state
- Widespread in roadsides in Southeast Minnesota
- **PHYSICAL HAZARD**: If you get sap on your skin and your skin is exposed to sunlight, a chemical burn can occur. Scars last for a long time.
- **PREVENTION**: Cover your skin and avoid contact with the sap.
- If controlling wild parsnip, protect yourself with long sleeves, long gloves, long pants, safety glasses with side shields, and closed-toed shoes.





SIMILAR LOOKING SPECIES:

Wild Parsnip

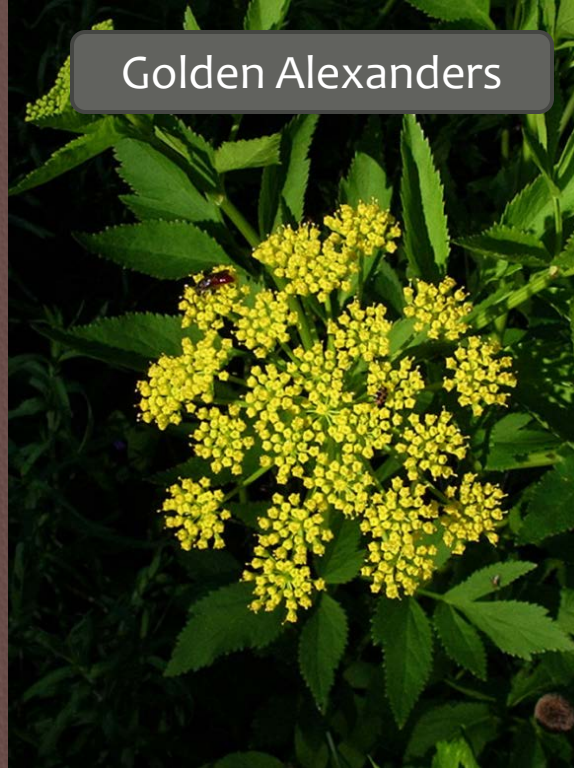
Golden Alexanders

Great St. John's Wort

Bird's Foot Coreopsis

Ox-eye

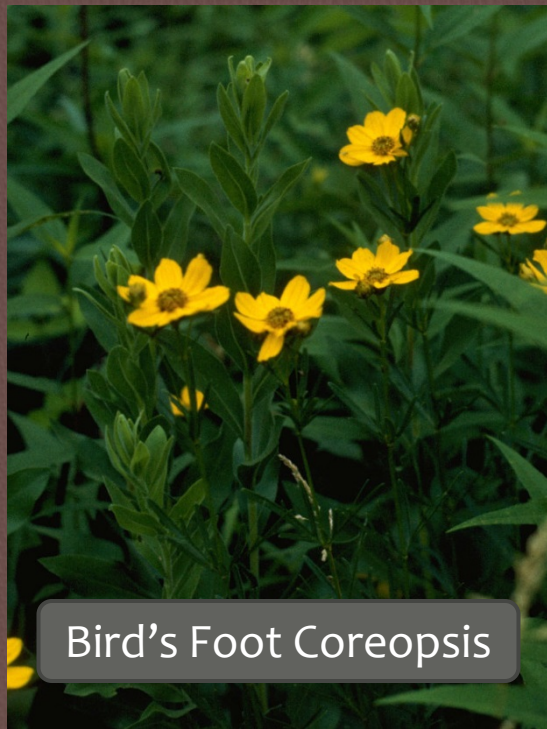
Cow Parsnip



Golden Alexanders



Great St. John's Wort



Bird's Foot Coreopsis



Ox-eye

Cow Parsnip





Seasonal Stages: Wild Parsnip

Early spring

Late spring or fall

Early summer

Summer flowers

Seedling/Late summer

Fall



Fall



Early
spring



Late
spring or
fall



Early
summer



Summer
flowers



Seedling /
Late
Summer



RANGE MAP

Wild Parsnip

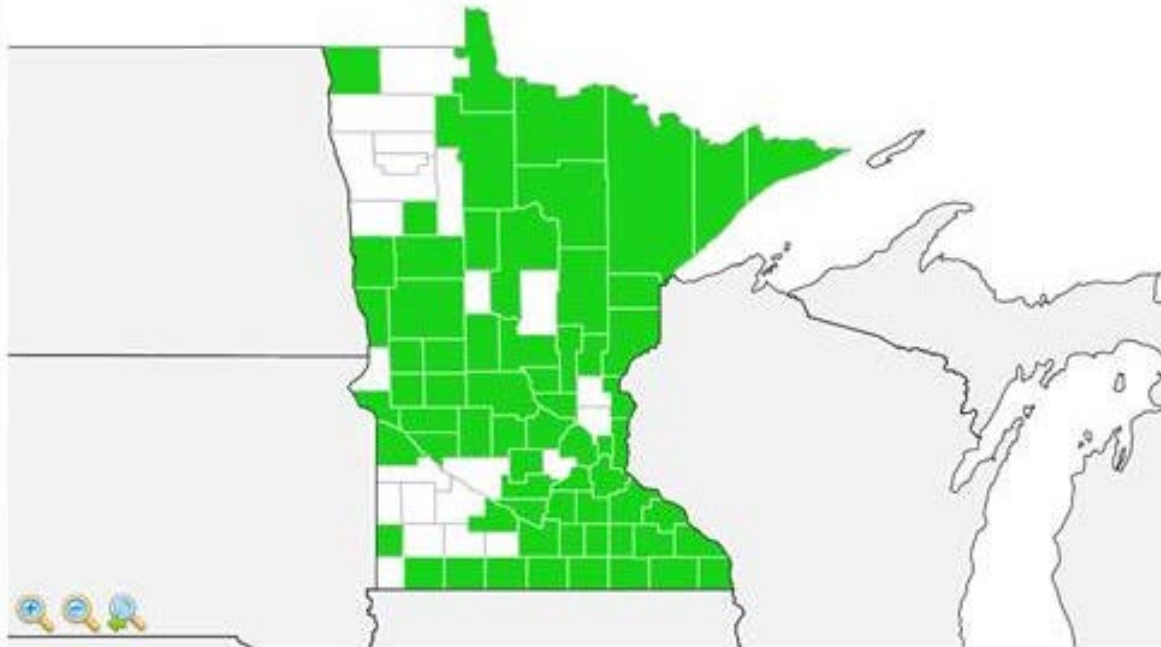
Wild parsnip is currently present in almost all of the continental U.S. and is becoming more common as roadways are built and degraded habitat is being made available.

wild parsnip

Pastinaca sativa L.

USDA PLANTS Symbol: PASA2
Invasive Plant Atlas

Distribution Maps: County / Southeast / Points on Google Maps



Please cite the EDDMapS as:

EDDMapS. 2013. Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System. The University of Georgia - Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health. Available online at <http://www.eddmaps.org/>; last accessed August 14, 2013.

Wild Parsnip

- **IN CASE OF EXPOSURE:**

- Move to a shady area and cover skin to reduce further sun exposure.
- Cool and cover the affected area with a wet cloth.
- Wash with soap and water as soon as possible.
- Do not rupture blisters.
- Avoid infection by keeping the area clean and applying first aid antiseptic cream.
- If you are burned, seek medical treatment.

[Click here to view the University of Wisconsin Extension video on Wild Parsnip \(2:26\)](#)

[Click here to read about the plant CHARACTERISTICS](#)





Common Poison Ivy

Toxicodendron radicans

- **STATUS**: Widespread in forests and along road sides in southeastern MN. Can be a shrub or a vine.

[Click here to access the
Poison Ivy, Oak & Sumac
Information Center
Website](#)





Western Poison Ivy

Toxicodendron rydbergii

STATUS: Widespread in the state.

Western poison ivy does not form vines, but common poison ivy can.





Poison Ivy

- **IMPACT:** Contact with the oil from poison ivy can cause an itchy rash. Some people are highly allergic.
- Burning poison ivy can release fumes from the oil which can be hazardous if breathed in.
- Use caution when weed whipping and mowing in areas where poison ivy is present.
- Oil is present in both leaves and stems. Use caution when disturbing ground where stems may be present.





Poison Ivy

- **PREVENTION:** Cover skin with long sleeves, long pants, gloves, and closed-toed shoes when working in areas where poison ivy is present.
- Avoid contact with clothing and equipment that may be contaminated with oil. Oil may persist on tools, equipment, pets or other objects for long periods of time. Re-transfer of oil is possible.
- Always wash hands with soap and water before touching exposed skin or taking a break.



Be careful of fallen branches. The one pictured above is poison ivy. Even a dead plant contains enough urushiol to cause an outbreak. Notice the hairs along the main vine - this is your primary clue as to its identity.





SIMILAR LOOKING SPECIES:

Poison Ivy

Wild blackberry

Trumpet vine

Indian strawberry

Virginia creeper



3 leaves - yes but this isn't poison ivy. Notice the thorns on the woody stem. This plant is wild blackberry. (Picture taken mid-April in USDA zone 7a-7b)



Contrary to popular belief, this is NOT poison ivy. This plant is a healthy Virginia Creeper. Virginia Creeper prefers growing conditions very similar to poison ivy and often will grow along side it. Notice the 5 leaves (poison ivy has 3 leaves) all similar in shape and how they are attached to the stem. The Virginia Creeper vine is woody with simple tendrils to hold the vine to its "host".



Another tree vine, this is trumpet vine. An invasive but beautiful flowering vine. Notice that there are multiple leaves per group. Definitely not poison ivy.



This is an Indian Strawberry plant. It is a creeper (generally low to the ground) and bears some resemblance to poison ivy in that it has a 3-parted leaf. Notice that the middle "leaf" does not have a longer stalk. Also the general shape of the leaves are different.



Seasonal Stages: Western Poison Ivy



Spring



Summer



Winter



Fall

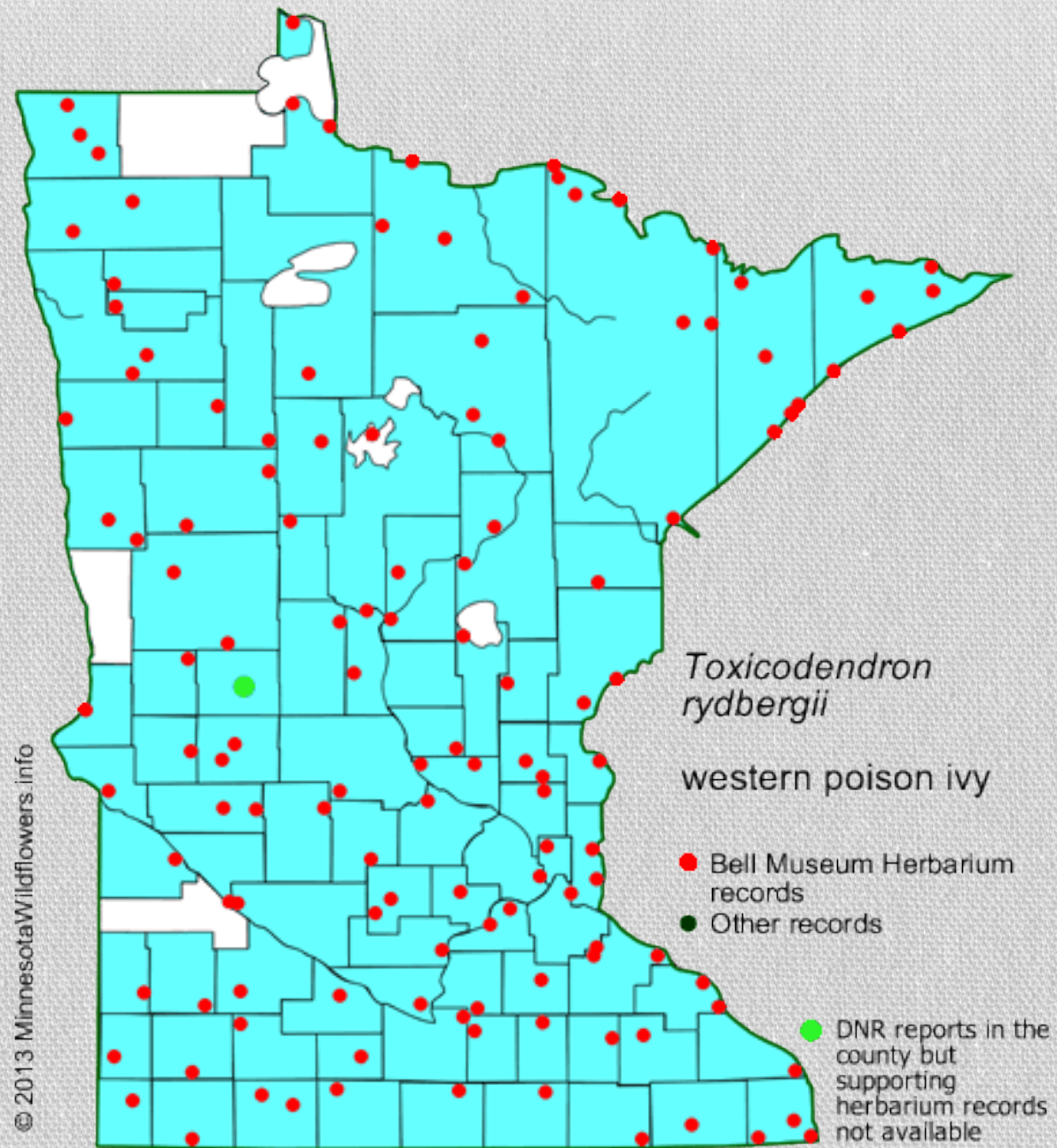
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2009 © Peter M. Dziuk

2006 © Peter M. Dziuk

RANGE MAP

Western Poison Ivy





Poison Ivy

- **IN CASE OF EXPOSURE:** Wash exposed skin immediately with soap and cold water.
- Visit a clinic if burns are present over large areas of the body or sensitive body parts.

[Click here to read about the plant CHARACTERISTICS](#)





Grecian Foxglove

Digitalis lanata Ehrh

- **STATUS:** Invasive in MN.
Largest populations present in Washington County, but present in other counties as well.

IMPACT:

- If the plant is pulled from the ground with bare hands, it can release chemicals that are absorbed into the skin and cause heart palpitations.
- Poisonous if ingested by humans and animals.
- All parts of plant are poisonous in both fresh and dried forms.
- Burning plants may release harmful fumes into the air.



[Click here for the Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture early detection map for Grecian Foxglove](#)



SIMILAR LOOKING SPECIES:

Grecian Foxglove

Large-flowered beard tongue

Rough blazing star

Purple prairie clover

Wild bergamot



Purple Prairie Clover



Large-Flowered
Beard Tongue



Wild Bergamot

Rough Blazing Star





Seasonal Stages: Grecian Foxglove



First year:
basal rosette



Seedling



Flowering stalk in second year
(blossoms in June and July)



Grecian Foxglove

- **PREVENTION:** Avoid skin contact. Follow best practices to reduce exposure during burning.
- **IN CASE OF EXPOSURE:** Seek prompt medical attention.



[Click here to read about the plant characteristics.](#)



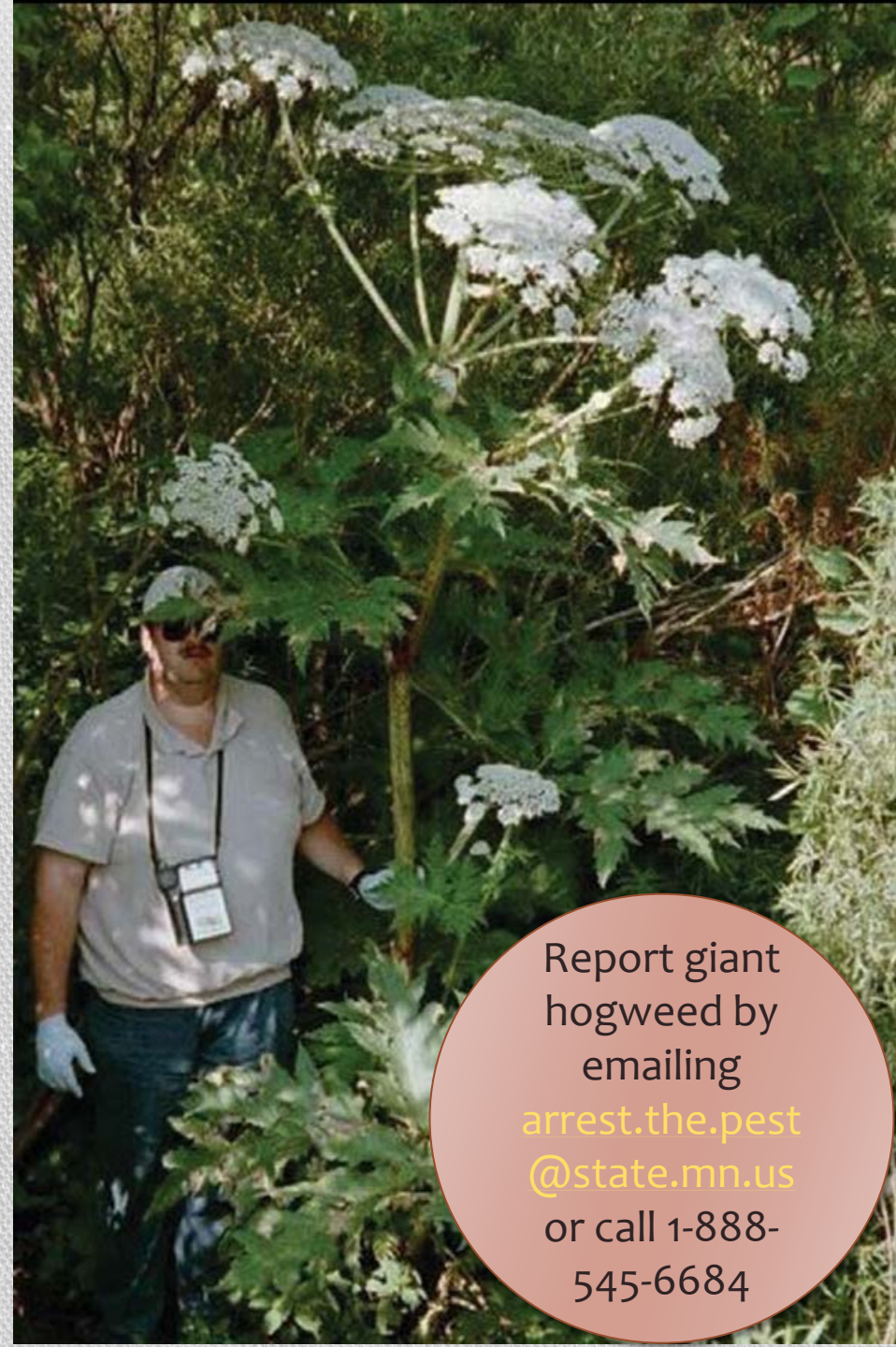


Giant Hogweed

Heracleum mantegazzianum

- **STATUS:** Not yet known to be in MN.
- Elsewhere, found along railroads, roadsides, rights-of-ways, vacant lots, streams, rivers, uncultivated or waste lands and agricultural areas.
- Can grow to 15-20 feet tall.
- **IMPACT:** Has potent sap similar to wild parsnip. **Sap in eyes can cause blindness.**

[Click here to read about the plant characteristics.](#)



Report giant
hogweed by
emailing
[arrest.the.pest
@state.mn.us](mailto:arrest.the.pest@state.mn.us)
or call 1-888-
545-6684



Giant Hogweed

Note the purple stem and
leaf shape





Similar Looking Species to Giant Hogweed



Cow Parsnip

[Click here to
watch the
“Giant Hogweed
Identification and
Comparison with
Cow Parsnip”
video
from the
Greater
Vancouver
Invasive Plant
Council](#)



RANGE MAP

Giant Hogweed

Giant hogweed is currently observed throughout Michigan, in northern Wisconsin and Indiana, northeastern Illinois, eastern Ohio, and into southern Ontario.





Poison Hemlock

- **STATUS:** Present in MN, growing in dense patches in wet areas, fields and disturbed habitats such as roadsides.
- **IMPACT:**
 - All parts of the hemlock plant (seeds, stem, leaves and flower) contain active neurotoxins.
 - If ingested, these neurotoxins can be fatal.
 - Hemlock may be confused for other plants.





Poison Hemlock

- **PREVENTION:**

- **Do not ingest any parts of plants.**
- Wear gloves when handling this plant.
- Use a shovel to cut the taproot 1-2 inches below the ground, then remove plant.

- **IN CASE OF EXPOSURE:** Seek medical attention immediately.

[Click here for more information on poison hemlock from the MNDNR.](#)

[Poison Hemlock Identification Video - UW Madison Extension](#)





Species Similar to Poison Hemlock

Spotted water hemlock is native to MN and also poisonous, but differs from poison hemlock.

Queen Anne's Lace is non-native to MN and often has a purple flower in the center of an umbel of white flowers.

Sweet cicely is native to MN and has shorter plants with small flower clusters.

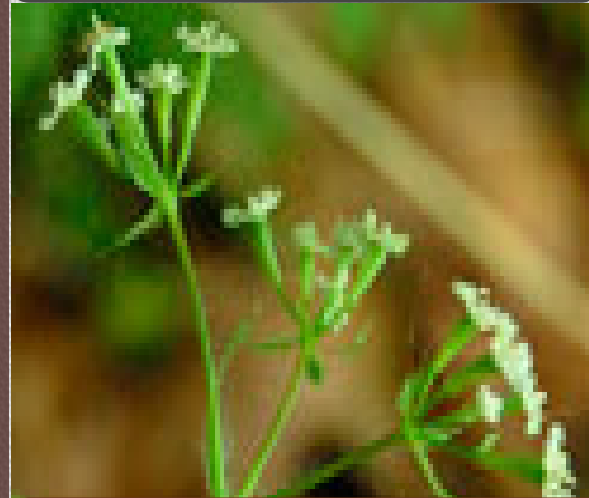
Japanese / Spreading hedge parsley is an invasive species, has sparser leaves and more branching than poison hemlock.



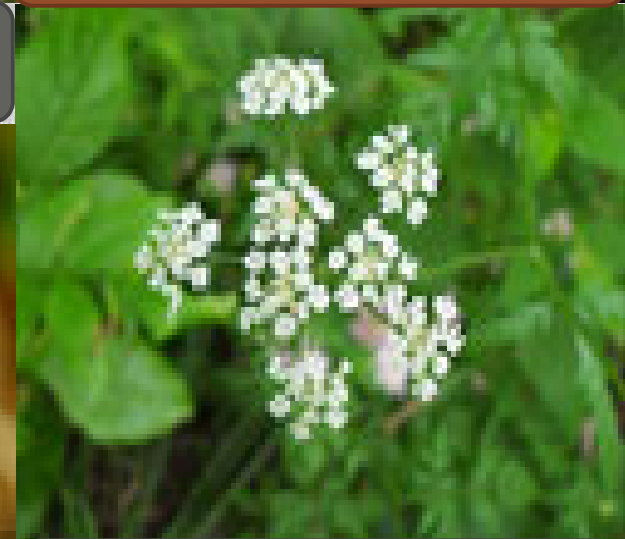
Spotted water hemlock



Queen Anne's Lace



Sweet cicely



Japanese / spreading
hedge parsley



Other Plants to Avoid

- **SPOTTED KNAPWEED** (*Centaurea stoebe* L. ssp. *Micranthos*) is a known skin irritant. Wear protective gloves and long sleeves.
- **LEAFY SPURGE** (*Euphorbia esula* L.) sap may cause skin rashes on sensitive persons after pulling or handling plants. Wear protective gloves and long sleeves.
- **COMMON TANSY** (*Tanacetum vulgare* L.) contains toxic alkaloids that can be absorbed through skin. Wear protective gloves when handling or pulling this plant.





GENERAL BEST PRACTICES WHEN WORKING AROUND PLANTS



General Best Practices

- Learn to identify plants that are hazardous.
- Don't eat any plants or parts of plants (this is common sense, right?!)
- Be aware of plants that cause injuries due to thorns and spines. Wear protective gloves and safety glasses with side shields.
- When working in areas where contact with vegetation can cause injury, wear long pants, long sleeves, work gloves, sturdy boots and safety glasses with side shields.
- Wear gloves when pulling plants.

A stylized, dark brown illustration of a plant with several large, pointed leaves and a cluster of small, round berries or buds on thin stems, positioned on the left side of the slide.


RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESCRIBED BURNING



Recommendations for Prescribed Burning

- Find out if there are any concentrations of poison ivy or Grecian foxglove in the burn unit. Both of these species have the potential to cause injury by inhalation of smoke containing plant oils.
- Plan ahead to stay upwind of the smoke as the fire is going through that part of the unit.
- Land managers should consider treatment of these species prior to the burn. Allow enough time for decomposition of the plant material, otherwise there is still the potential for the oils to volatilize during the burn.





**DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS
ABOUT WORKING WITH
POISONOUS AND
HAZARDOUS PLANTS?**

**ASK YOUR SUPERVISOR,
SAFETY PROGRAM STAFF,
OR A TERRESTRIAL
INVASIVE SPECIES
SPECIALIST**

**Safety and
Risk
Supervisor
651-259-
5471**

**Safety
Admin.
Northwest
and
Northeast
Regions
218-999-
7856**

**Safety
Admin.
Central and
Southern
Regions
651-259-
5489**