WILD PARSNIP

Pastinaca sativa L.

Prohibited - Control

Check out MnDOT's Carrot Comparison Guide for identification and key differences.

Common Names

Parsnip

Life Cycle

Herbaceous monocarpic perennial

Native Range

Eurasia

Look-a-Likes

Golden Alexanders (pg 84)

Habitat

Disturbed sites such as roadsides and abandoned fields or lots. Can occur in wet meadows but dry to mesic soils are more typical. Full to partial sun is a must for this species.

Means of Spread

Spreads primarily by seeds. Seeds are moved off infested sites by animal and human activity or wind and water movement. Seed is reported to be viable in soil for up to 4 years.

Toxicity

Contact with the sap and exposure to sunlight can produce painful, burning blisters (phytophotodermatitis).

Identification

Plant - Herbaceous, often stated to be biennial but is classed as a monocarpic perennial. First year as basal rosette with mature stems developing a hollow, grooved flowering stalk potentially reaching 5 feet.

Leaves - Basal rosette leaves can be 6 inches in height and are pinnately compound with 5 to 15 leaflets. Flowering stalk leaves are alternate, 2 to 5 leaflets that become smaller near the top of the stem. Leaflets are coarsely toothed, sinuses cut to varying depths creating lobes of various sizes. The base of the leaf stalks wrap or clasp the grooved stem.

Flower - 12 to 35, 5-petaled, small yellow flowers on wide, flat umbels of 15 to 25 umbellets approximately 2 to 6 inches across.

Bloom Time - June to July

Seed and Fruit - Seeds are small, broad, oval, slightly ribbed, and are produced in the umbels several weeks after flowering.

Root - Long thick taproot that is similar in appearance and smell to cultivated parsnips.

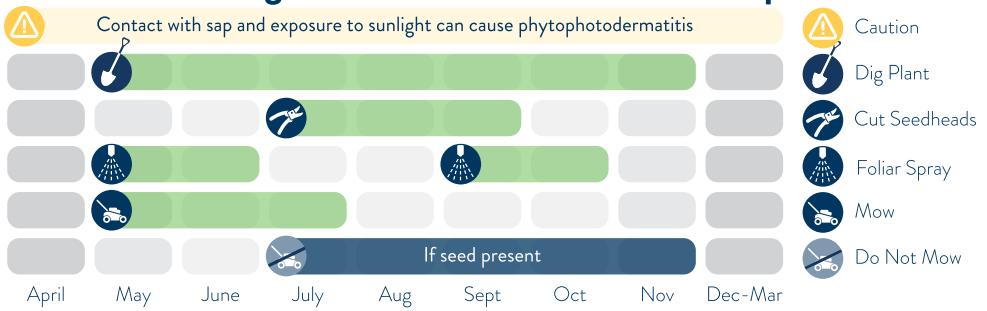
Management

See MnDOT Factsheet:
Work Safely Around Wild Parsnip

Appropriate protective clothing including gloves, goggles and long sleeve shirts should be worn and contact with the stems should be avoided.

Mechanical - When possible plan early mowing at first inflorescence, then monitor and repeat as plants will likely resprout, bolt and flower. Mowing during the secondary inflorescence may prevent seed production that season. If cutting or mowing after seed set, clean equipment to leave seeds on the infested site.

Treatment Timing — Wild Parsnip



Chemical - Foliar applications in the spring and fall targeting rosettes can greatly reduce seed production.

Fire - Prescribed burns can kill germinating seedlings and strengthen native plant communities.

Effective herbicide formulations: 2,4-D, dicamba + 2,4-D, aminocyclopyrachlor + chlorsulfuron, chlorsulfuron, glyphosate, metsulfuron.