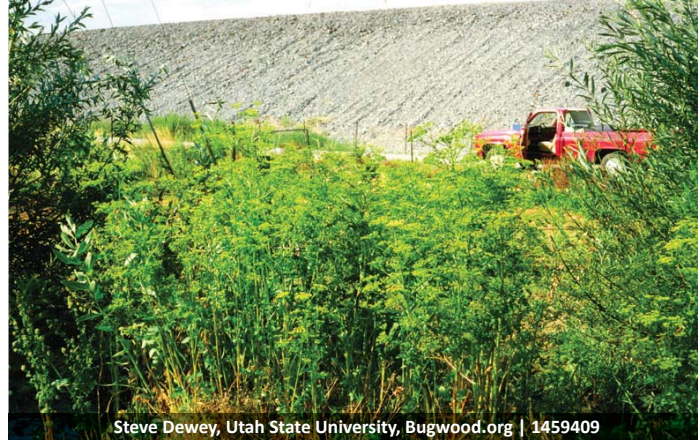


WILD PARSNIP

Pastinaca sativa

Status in Maine: widespread

WARNING: Avoid contact with plant sap.



Description: Tall (3-5'), biennial herb; member of the carrot family. Entire plant is smooth, hairless, and bright yellow-green. **Leaves:** First year plants form basal rosettes of pinnately compound leaves (to 16" long, 6" wide) with long petioles. Leaflets are variably lobed with coarsely toothed margins. Upper leaves on flowering plants are much smaller. **Flowers:** Flat topped umbels (3-8" across) of small yellow flowers. **Fruit/seeds:** Elliptical, flat, dry fruits; winged; ~¼" long. **Stem:** Green, smooth and ridged. **Root:** Cylindrical taproot, few side roots. **WARNING: Wild parsnip sap contains a chemical that causes dermatitis when skin is exposed to sun. Wear safety gear when working with this plant and avoid contact with plant juices. As a contaminant in forage crops, it reduces both weight gain and fertility in livestock.**

Native range: Eurasia. **How arrived in U.S.:** Escaped from cultivation as a root crop.

Reproduction: By seed. One plant can produce a few thousand seeds. The plant dies after flowering. Wind is the primary dispersal agent, followed by surface water. Seeds commonly spread in mulch hay and straw. It also spreads along transportation corridors, where seeds are moved by vehicles, mowers, and other equipment.

Habitat: Disturbed sites, roadsides, waste areas, agricultural fields, stream banks. Shade intolerant.



WILD PARSNIP

Similar native species: American cow-parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*) is much larger and has white flowers. Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*) is a shorter plant, with smaller yellow umbels, and fewer leaflets. Purplestem angelica (*Angelica atropurpurea*) has a smooth, waxy, green-purple stem and globe-shaped white-flowered inflorescences; sea coast angelica (*Angelica lucida*) is similar, and grows in coastal areas.

Similar non-native species: Wild chervil (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) has fern-like, cut leaves throughout and white flowers. Common hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) is a smaller version of giant hogweed; white flowers.

Control methods: Digging, gouging, or rototilling that severs the root crown from the taproot will kill the plant. Precisely timed mowing that occurs after flower heads form but before seeds enlarge will end the plant and the seed crop. Chemical methods can provide effective control. Spray a foliar glyphosate solution on rosettes in fall or spring, or to bolting or flowering plants. **REMEMBER TO WEAR PROTECTIVE GEAR AROUND THIS PLANT.**

