



Weed of The Week

Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*)

Brought to the United States from Europe as a root crop used as medicine foods and drinks, this week's weed of the week features Wild Parsnip. Often confused with poison hemlock, Wild Parsnip can be found growing throughout all Ohio. This weed's habitat is very similar to poison hemlock, along fence lines, roadsides, and waste areas. Wild parsnip is a biennial weed, meaning that it takes two years to complete a full life cycle. The first year the plant will produce a rosette and then the second year the plant will bolt and produce seed and die. Wild Parsnip will reach heights of 5 feet tall and create a yellow umbel type flower like poison hemlock and wild carrot. Flowering will begin mid-May and last throughout the summer and early fall. A good way to tell the difference between Wild Parsnip and Poison Hemlock is that Poison Hemlock will get much tall (about 10 feet tall), have purple blotches on the stem, and produce a white flower rather than yellow. Wild Parsnip is not toxic, but for livestock and certain people with fair skin encountering the plant can create skin sensitivity to the sun. There are many ways to control wild parsnip but some of the most common and effective is by mechanical tillage, pulling the plant, and herbicides such as 2-4-D, glyphosate, and Dicamba. Herbicide treatments should be completed in early spring when the plant is still in the rosette stage of growth.

