



# Wild Chervil

(*Anthriscus sylvestris*)

**Description:** Wild chervil, a biennial or short-lived perennial, is a member of the parsley family. It grows 1-4 feet tall from a taproot. The stems are hollow; hairy in the lower portions and smooth in upper portions of the plant. The leaves are finely divided, fernlike, and slightly hairy, especially on the lower surface. Flowers are white and form clusters in an umbrella shape. Each flower produces 2 joined seeds, about ¼ inch long, that are narrow, smooth and shiny dark brown. The seeds of wild chervil distinguish it from the similar wild carrot and poison hemlock, which also have fernlike leaves, a taproot and white umbel flowers. Wild chervil blooms earlier than wild carrot and is a much smaller plant than poison hemlock, which can grow up to 10 feet. A strong distinguishing characteristic to identify this species from others is the ridges on the stems as well as the lack of odor of the foliage that is present with poison hemlock, etc.



**Impacts:** Wild chervil is listed as a “B Designate” on the state noxious weed control list and is mandated for control in Thurston County. Experience has shown that wild chervil is highly adaptable; growing in sandy, gravelly, loamy, wet or well-drained areas, with low to high light intensities and varying degrees of soil fertility. Most of Thurston County is highly susceptible to infestation. The plant’s fast growth, large size, and ability to create monocultures poses a serious threat to native plants, crops and agriculture.

**Control Options:** Thurston County’s Integrated Pest Management emphasizes cultural, biological, and manual control methods to keep pests and vegetation problems low enough to prevent damage. The strategy of Thurston County’s IPM policy is to minimize the use of pesticides.

## ► Cultural / Habitat

The most effective control of wild chervil is prevention. Above all, prevent plants from going to seed. Wild chervil is a common ingredient in British wildflower seed mixtures. Review the ingredients of wildflower mixes to avoid accidental introduction, and avoid using wildflower mixes with unidentified seed components entirely. To prevent plants from spreading from known infestations, carefully clean vehicles, boots, clothing, and pets after visiting infested areas.

## ► Manual / Mechanical

Manual control of a very small population (up to 12 plants) that has not become established might be successfully controlled if the soil is loose and damp enough to remove entire roots without breaking off.

Research conducted on a portion of the Black River Unit of Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge south of Olympia, WA showed that tillage and seeding of grass species provides less than 50% control of wild chervil after two consecutive years. Tilling the area during the drought stress portions of the year; July, August, and September is the most effective control measure when coupled with a springtime herbicide application. Tilling brings the storage roots of the plant to the surface where they dry out and no longer sprout. However, the tillage must take place several times and it will not prevent seed production in the wet months; March-June.



Extensive manual removal attempts have been performed near the Black River research site and were found to be ineffective. Cutting of wild chervil was done in May and by mid-June all of the plants had re-grown and were re-blooming. Digging and pulling of wild chervil was then tried but re-growth occurred from these practices also. Re-blossom on most sites took only about 10 days. In 2002, more than 10,000 lbs. of chervil was removed from county rights of way using manual methods. After removal or final tillage of wild chervil; seeding or replanting the area with a beneficial species is recommended. Native plant communities provide competition which makes the area less prone to re-infestation.

► **Biological** There are currently no known biological control methods available for wild chervil.

## ► Chemical

Spot spraying with an herbicide containing the active ingredient **glyphosate** (example: Roundup Pro®, Eliminator Weed and Grass Killer®, etc.) can be used to treat wild chervil effectively. Glyphosate is a non-selective herbicide and can damage or kill any other plant that it contacts, including grass. Due to recent health reviews, Thurston County recognized some scientific studies have concluded the use of glyphosate products have carcinogenic potential. The risk of spot spraying with these products is considered to be low provided the applicator uses personal protection equipment which includes chemically resistant gloves in addition to long sleeve shirt, long pants, socks and shoes and all other label precautions are followed.

**Imazapyr** (example: Polaris® or Alligare™ Imazapyr 2SL) is also effective in controlling infestations of wild chervil. Imazapyr is a non-selective herbicide and may damage or kill any other plants that it contacts, including grass. It may also leave persistent bare ground in the treatment area. This can be minimized by using only as directed, spraying at the recommended strength and no more than necessary to wet the surface of the leaves and stems. Products containing the active ingredient imazapyr are considered “moderate in hazard” by Thurston County’s pesticide review process for the potential for chemical mobility and persistence.

**Thurston County has observed that most ready-to-use, pre-mixed products do not contain sufficient active ingredients to be as effective as concentrated products that are then mixed with water to create a specific finished concentration. The following instructions are for concentrated products which will be mixed down to a specified dilution rate. Be sure to read your label carefully, and make adjustments to rates accordingly.**

### Foliar applications:

- Using a spot application, spray plants thoroughly on the stems and leaves, enough to be wet but not to the point of dripping. Spot application means the herbicide is applied only to the target plants, and not on the surrounding plants or soil.
- Addition of a methylated seed oil or a non-ionic surfactant to the tank mix may be added to some tank mixes to assist the herbicide in adhering to and penetrating the leaves and stems. Follow label recommendations for type and amount to use.
- Keep people and pets off treated areas until spray solution has dried.

**Timing:** Apply either glyphosate or imazapyr in the spring when plants are actively growing and in the pre-bud to early bud growth stage—the goal is to insure all plants have emerged, but are treated before they reproduce.

**Pollinator Protection:** To minimize negative impacts to bees and other pollinators, treatment prior to blooming is recommended. Removal of flowers before treatment can be an option in some situations. If treatment must occur during the blooming period, try to spray early or late in the day or on cloudy, cool days when pollinators are least active.



Product/Method	Rates	Mix
<b>Imazapyr</b> Polaris® Alligare™ Imazapyr 2SL	2%	Add 2.6 oz (5.2 Tablespoons) concentrated product per gallon of water.
<b>Glyphosate</b> Roundup Pro® Eliminator Weed & Grass Killer®	2%	Add 2.6 oz (5.2 Tablespoons) concentrated product per gallon of water.

**READ AND FOLLOW ALL LABEL DIRECTIONS AND RESTRICTIONS.** Obey all label precautions including site specific and safety measures. Always use personal protective equipment that includes coveralls, chemical resistant gloves, shoes plus socks, and protective eyewear. Use of brand names does not connote endorsement and is for reference only; other formulations of the same herbicides may be available under other names. Information provided is current as of the date of the fact sheet. Pesticide product registration is renewed annually. Product names and formulations may vary from year to year.

### REFERENCES:

“Wild Chervil, A Relatively New Weed Problem in Central Vermont”, University of Vermont Extension

Guide to Weeds in British Columbia: <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/cropprot/weedguid/chervil.htm>

Nova Scotia Dept. of Ag. & Fisheries Noxious Weed information for Wild Chervil, January 20, 2003

WA State Noxious Weed Board Written Findings;  
Pacific Northwest Extension Bulletin #367

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Thurston County Noxious Weed Control  
11834 Tilley Road S.  
Olympia, WA 9812  
Phone: 360-786-5576  
T.D.D. 360-754-2933  
tcweeds@co.thurston.wa.us  
[www.co.thurston.wa.us/tcweeds](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/tcweeds)