

WILD CHERVIL

Anthriscus sylvestris

Status in Maine: localized



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Description: A biennial herb, and member of the carrot family. Typically at least 3' tall; it has been described as Queen Anne's lace on steroids. **Leaves:** Alternate, compound and fern-like. Hairy sheath present where petiole attaches to stem. **Flowers:** Small, white, 5-petaled, and occur on 3" wide flat umbels. **Fruit/seeds:** Each flower forms 2-pointed seed pods, ¼" long, that turn dark brown. **Stem:** Hollow, furrowed; hairy; becoming smooth at the top of plant. **Root:** Thick, tuberous. Tap root can extend to 6'. Produces vegetative buds on axillary roots.

Native range: Eurasia. **How arrived in U.S.:** Introduced in the early 1900s in ornamental seed mixes, possibly to recreate the look of British hedgerows.

Reproduction: Primarily by seed. The plant dies after flowering, which it does early in New England (May/June). Dispersal agents include vehicles, especially mowing equipment, and wind. Persistent seed banks are not known. It also produces lateral root buds that can break off and form new plants. Cutting stimulates root bud production.

Habitat: Disturbed sites, roadsides, waste areas, agricultural areas, stream banks, and floodplains. Prefers moist, fertile soil.

Similar native species: Chinese hemlock-parsley (*Conioselinum chinense*)—yes, this is native— is usually smaller, leaves are lacier with fewer leaflets that are more finely dissected. Seeds pods are not pointed. Chinese



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hemlock-parsley typically grows on floodplains and in swamps.

Similar non-native species: Queen Anne's lace (*Daucus carota*) is hairy throughout; its umbel has a small purple floret in the center and long, curved bracts at its base. Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) is smooth-stemmed.

Control methods: Livestock will graze it when plants are young. Hand pulling is not recommended. The long tap root holds the plant in place and pulling results in broken stems, which encourages vigorous re-sprouting from the crown. Mowing 3-6 times per season will suppress seed production. Multiple tillage over two years followed by sowing the infested areas with competitive species like perennial grasses and goldenrods can provide long term results. Wild chervil exhibits herbicide resistance. Glyphosate is effective on growing plants in the rosette stage, but a concentrated solution should be used. ***Special rules apply to herbicide use in or near wetlands and waterbodies - see the section in the back of this guide titled "Use of Herbicides to Control Invasive Plants in or Near Wetlands and Waterbodies."***

