



BEWARE OF THIS POISONOUS PLANT

In recent springs you may have noticed this bushy plant, with fern-like leaves and pretty, white flowers growing in the ditch. Some people have asked what this plant is because they would like it as a flower. This weed is poison hemlock. The plant is common along roadsides, in ditches, waste areas, pastures, in wet areas and fencerows. With the late spring we have experienced this year, I have not seen nearly as much of this plant as in previous years. It is just starting to grow with the warmer temperatures we have experienced recently. It is just later in developing, so good to spray it before it starts to take off. All parts are poisonous and contain the toxic alkaloid, coniine and others. Poison Hemlock is around every year, but in 2017 we had perfect growing conditions for this plant and we were inundated with it. It is a biennial plant and comes up in the fall as a rosette. It is sometimes confused with the plant Queen Anne's lace or wild carrot which shows up along the roadside and in pastures later this summer. Poison hemlock's stem is hairless and has purple spots on it, while Queen Anne's lace has a hairy stem. The leaves of poison hemlock are not hairy, while the underside of the leaves of Queen Anne's lace have hairs. Last year there were reports of cattle poisonings in a pasture in Lancaster County from poison hemlock and other parts of southeast Nebraska as well. Livestock generally do not eat this plant, but if they are hungry and there is no other forage to eat, they will eat it. Also if it is cut and allowed to dry down, cattle may be more apt to eat it. The canes of the plant have been found to be toxic after it dies for a long time.

The plant is common along roadsides, in ditches, waste areas, pastures, in wet areas and fencerows. All parts are poisonous and contain the toxic alkaloid, coniine and others. The plant is most poisonous if it is ingested. The best time to control this weed is when it is in the rosette stage, in the fall or early spring. It can be controlled with pesticides including 2,4,-D & Dicamba and Grazon P+D. Do not harvest and bale hay with poison hemlock in it! This plant has always been around and we have not had issues with it until last year, just be aware of it. If you have questions me at (402) 274-4755.

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