

Hemlock

Umbelliferae - *Conium maculatum*



What does it look like?

The leaf is made up of sub-divided leaflets makes it look like a fern in the vegetative state. The stems of hemlock leaves have no hairs and also often have a purplish tinge. Flowers from September to January, Hemlock flowers are white with 5 petal and no sepals. Flower clusters are on highly branched stalks, which can be up to 8 feet off the ground. Poison hemlock is a biennial, so it initially forms a rosette in the first year's growth. The rosettes are rather bushy compared to other plants and can grow up to 40 cm tall and wide. During the second year, the plant grows erect, highly branched, flower stalks. In its mature form, poison hemlock can grow as high as 2 metres tall. The stems are smooth and hollow and are conspicuously spotted with purple or pink blotches. Preferred Habitat: Roadside, Wasteland, Riverbeds, Pastoral and forest margins.

Management programme

- Organisms of interest

Why is it a problem?

Every part of this plant, especially the fresh leaves and fruit, contains a volatile, oily alkaloid, which is so poisonous that it can cause birth defects and death in livestock. The poisonous property occurs in ALL parts of the plant.

Control methods

Physical Control

- Pull or dig out plants (all year)
- Mowing or slashing flowering plants will only provide temporary control

Chemical Control

- Young hemlock plants can be treated with 2,4-D or flumetsulam without harming most other pasture components
 - Larger plants are best controlled by spot spraying with a herbicide such as glyphosate.
- Do Not allow livestock access to paddock after hemlock has been controlled until the plant has lost its green colour and is uninteresting to animals.

[Request info](https://eservices.es.govt.nz/online-services/new/BiosecurityRFS/step/1?Subject=PlantPests&Species=190)

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