

Wild Chervil

Anthriscus sylvestris (L.) Hoffm

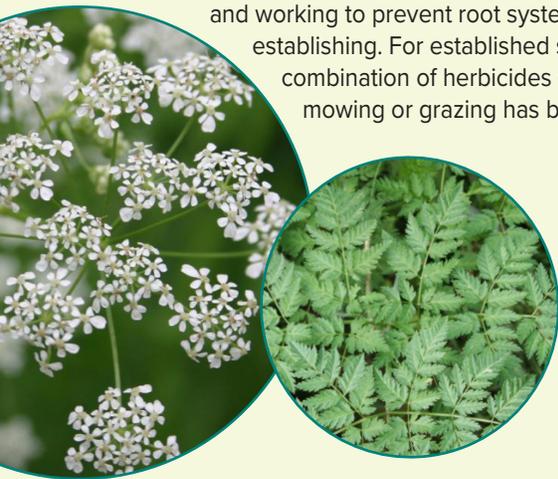
Wild chervil is considered regionally noxious in the Lower Mainland. It is not designated as a provincial noxious weed, but is considered an Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) species. The plant is a concern as it spreads rapidly and quickly dominates areas. Locally, the plant was documented at Burnaby Lake Regional Park in 2012, and surveyed in three Burnaby park locations in 2018. Due to its similarity to a number of other members of the parsley family, we ask for your help to keep a lookout for this plant.

Background

Wild chervil is highly adaptive and can occur as an annual, biennial or short-lived perennial. Native to Europe, western Asia and northwestern Africa, this plant prefers rich soils and does well in a variety of habitats, especially moist valley bottoms, pastures, roadside areas, old-field habitats, riparian areas and wetlands.

This species reproduces through seed and budding from the roots. Each flowering plant produces 800-1200 seeds which remains viable in the soil for 1-2 years. Flowers occur late April-June with seeds appearing June through July. Seeds typically germinate following spring. Reproduction also occurs from root buds at the crown of the plant's root. These buds detach and become viable plants after the parent plant dies.

Mowing is a significant means of transport, especially along roads and rights-of-way. The seeds are also consumed by birds and small mammals. This species tends to be resistant to herbicides, making it a difficult weed to manage. The province advises removing new infestations immediately and working to prevent root systems from establishing. For established stands, a combination of herbicides with timed mowing or grazing has been effective.



How to Identify Wild Chervil

Like its parsley relatives, wild chervil has white flowers in umbrella-like clusters on raised stalks. Flowers are small (0.2-0.5 cm) with five notched petals topping 2cm-long stalks.

- » **Stem:** hollow, furrowed and sport a fringe of hairs at each stem node
- » **Leaves:** fern-like with triangular outline, but not 'lace-like' as with other related species. Similar in shape and size at the base to those along the stem. The bases of the leaves clasp the stems, which can grow 0.3-1.8 metres tall
- » **Seeds:** joined in pairs by antenna-like structures at the top and are long and narrow (6-7mm long) with a distinct beak (point) comprising 1/3 of the total length.

As with other members of the parsley family, wild chervil has a taproot. This species' rooting system tends to be quite thick and tuberous and spreads aggressively (up to 2 meters), making established plants difficult to remove. The stem hairs and thick taproot are the easiest way to differentiate wild chervil from species like the related, but native Pacific water parsley and poison hemlock.

While mainly recognized in the Lower Mainland for its impact to agricultural areas, this invader grows well in moist woodlands and aquatic habitats, out-competing native plant communities through its aggressive rooting system and shading of other understory plants, making it a concern for natural areas management.

Report wild chervil sightings or suspected sightings (include photos and location if possible) to:
City of Burnaby Environmental Technician
Phone: 604-294-7690 | Email: invasivespecies@burnaby.ca