

Invasive Species Highlight

Wild Parsnip

Wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*) is a perennial herbaceous plant that is native to Europe and Asia and was first discovered in Minnesota in the 1990s. This species is on the Control List, meaning that efforts must be made to prevent the spread of seeds or other propagating parts.

No transportation, propagation, or sale is allowed.

Environmental Impact

WARNING: When the sap of wild parsnip contacts skin in the presence of sunlight, it can cause chemical burns that can look like a rash with blistering and discoloration of the skin (Phytophotodermatitis).

This species easily moves into disturbed habitats and is often found along roadsides, forest edges, and trails, creating monocultures that replace native animal and plant habitat. It invades slowly, but it spreads rapidly and can severely modify open dry, moist, and wet-moist habitats. Wild parsnip has also been found to invade native prairies.



Identification

- Starts as a low rosette (6" tall) for one or more years, grows a flowering stalk (average 4' tall) in the following year, blooms, then dies.
- Alternate leaves with 5-15 egg-shaped leaflets, coarse teeth, and lobes. Smaller upper leaves with stout, hollow, grooved stems.
- Flowers grow in flat clusters (2"-6" wide) of small, 5-petaled yellow flowers. Blooming occurs in June to late summer.
- Dozens of small, oval, ribbed, straw-colored seeds that remain viable up to 4 years.
- A long, thick taproot resembling cultivated parsnip.

Look-alikes

Golden alexanders (native) - Smooth shiny stem and leaves with 3 leaflets

Heart-leaved alexanders (native) - Smooth shiny stem and simple, oval leaves

Cow parsnip (native) - white flowers

Queen Anne's lace (invasive) - white flowers



Report new occurrences

Submit a report through EDDMaps, iNaturalist, Seek or by contacting your local SWCD.

Visit our website for additional Invasive Species Highlights - winonaswcd.org

For any questions, call Abbi Hoffman - 507-523-2171 x113

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References and Resources

“*Pastinaca sativa* (Wild Parsnip)” *Minnesota Wildflowers* <https://www.minnesotawildflowers.info/flower/wild-parsnip>

“Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*)” *Minnesota Department of Natural Resources*. <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/terrestrialplants/herbaceous/wildparsnip.html>

“Wild Parsnip” *Minnesota Department of Agriculture*. <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants/pestmanagement/weedcontrol/noxiouslist/wildparsnip>

“Wild Parsnip” Gupta et al. *University of Minnesota Extension*. <https://extension.umn.edu/identify-invasive-species/wild-parsnip>



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