Identifying Characteristics of Poison Hemlock and Look-Alike Plants

Plant	Stem	Flower/Leaf	Other features / Noxious weed classification	Picture
Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*)	Hairless and hollow with purplish streaks or splotches.	White flowers in umbrels. Fern-like, triangular leaves with opposing leaflets.	Grows up to ten feet tall. The crushed leaves and flowers have a musty, unpleasant odor. All parts are highly toxic. Class B	 
Queen Anne's lace also known as **wild carrot** (*Daucus carota*)	No purple mottling on hairy stem, hence the "Queen has hairy legs."	Fern-like with small, toothed leaflets. Smells like carrot when crushed. Lacy flowers up to 3 inches wide usually have a dark red to purple spot in the middle.	Not poisonous to humans but can be harmful to livestock. Sap can trigger a skin rash. Up to five feet tall. Narrow, usually white taproot. Class C	
Wild chervil (*Anthriscus sylvestris)*	Hollow and ridged. Hairs on lower stem, smooth on upper stem.	Fern-like leaves. Small white flower clusters in umbrels.	Not known to be toxic but is a noxious weed. On Washington quarantine list. Class B	
Wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*)	Grooved, hollow, hairless. May be purple-tinged.	Coarse leaves, toothed or lobed. Yellow flowers in umbrels.	Poisonous, causing intense burning, rash, and other issues to humans and pets. Not on Washington noxious weed list	

Plant	Stem	Flower/Leaf	Other features / Noxious weed classification	Picture
Water hemlock (*Cicuta douglasii*)	No purple mottling on smooth stem. Highly poisonous brown or straw-colored liquid released when the stem is broken or cut.	Leaves are thin and long and not fern-like. Small, white flowers that grow in umbrels.	Poisonous to humans and livestock. Grows in wetlands, meadows, pastures, and streams, reaching three feet. Roots have strong carrot-like odor. Not on Washington noxious weed list	
Giant hogweed *(Heracleum mantegazzianum)*	Hollow with reddish-purple spots or splotches, purplish bristles. Prominent white hairs.	Deeply lobed leaves up to 5 feet wide. Toothed edges. Broad, flat-topped white flower clusters (umbrels).	Sap is extremely poisonous and phototoxic. More highly concentrated at base of stem. Tall, growing 15 to 20 feet. Class A	
Cow parsnip (*Heracleum maximum)*	Hollow, grooved, fine white hairs. Sometimes have purple spots.	Large, lobed, maple-leaf like. Clusters (umbrels) of small white flowers.	Sap is poisonous and phototoxic. Looks similar to *Heracleum mantegazzianum,* but smaller. Not on WA noxious weed list; native plant	

Resources

Poison Hemlock brochure (Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board)
Noxious Weeds that Harm Washington State: Western Washington Field Guide (Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board)
Don't Touch These Plants (U.S. Fish and Wildlife)