

The Enemy: Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*)

Strategy: is a biennial plant that grows up to 12 foot tall. This is the most toxic of all the plants that we have growing in the area. The plant hosts white flowers (don't mistake this plant for wild parsley or wild carrot). This plant is easy to distinguish as the stems have a purple striping up and down them that the other plants do not. The leaves are fern-like and pinnately divided and resemble Grandma's end table doilies. This plant hosts a white taproot which when viewed in cross-section resembles thick walls with hollow chambers.

Attack: This plant inhabits the riparian areas along streams and ditches or even where there are sub-waters near roadways. It can become very thick once the plants become established. As the plant matures it blocks out sunlight and robs the soil of valuable nutrients and water. Wildlife cannot travel through the bamboo like stems (although they don't turn woody) and obviously little or no animals can feed on it to help control it. All parts of this plant are poisonous to livestock and humans, in fact the extract of this plant was used to execute Socrates of Ancient Greece. People have been killed by the plant when she mistakenly put this into her salad.

Defense: There is one insect, a moth, that defoliates this plant (available from the County Weed District). Mechanically digging up the plants can be effective in the first few years of establishment. Cover your hands with latex or nitrile gloves then apply your leather gloves and get to removing. Use herbicides such as 1 oz/acre of Escort XP or Telar XP, and on outer side of irrigation ditch banks - 3.3 oz/acre is best, but remember not to get the products inside the ditch banks. Treatments in early spring are best, but these products can be used right up to a late bloom stage of the plant.