

## Wild Parsnip

Wild Parsnip, also known as Poison Parsnip, is a toxic plant that is rapidly spreading throughout Renfrew County and District.

### How do Wild Parsnip plants affect your health?

When the stem is broken or the plant is brushed against, exposure to the sap can cause severe rashes, blisters or burns resulting in brown scars that can last for several years. Temporary or permanent blindness may also result if the sap comes in contact with the eyes.

### How can you protect yourself?

It is important to recognize the plant and avoid it. Wild Parsnip plants vary in height from 50 to 150 cm and produce yellow flowers with 5 petals forming a head shaped like an umbrella. Leaves are branched and are characterized by a saw toothed edge.



Contact the County of Renfrew's weed inspector to obtain more information if you see Wild Parsnip posing a health risk at a specific location.

### Where does Wild Parsnip grow?

Wild Parsnip is amongst the most visible yellow-flowered weeds in disturbed areas, such as roadside ditches, along railroad right of ways, through cracks in parking lot pavement, around sports fields and recreation areas, fields, pastures, fence rows and yards during July, August and September.

### What can you do to reduce the amount of Wild Parsnip plants in the region?

Removing Wild Parsnip plants is the best way to limit their spread. Always wear goggles, rubber gloves, rubber boots and coveralls when removing these plants. Afterwards thoroughly wash your boots and gloves with soap, water and a scrub brush before taking

them off.

- **Mowing:** Mowing is a practical way of controlling the spread of Wild Parsnip, but it must be done between late June and early July, before the plants flower. Mowing later on could spread the seeds and make a Wild Parsnip infestation worse.
- **Hand Pulling:** Pulling out a Wild Parsnip plant by hand will kill it. It is easier to remove plants with stout stems after a period of rain or during a drought, when the root shrinks. However, this method is not practical if there is a large infestation in the area.
- **Digging:** When digging to remove Wild Parsnip, use a narrow shovel, spade or trowel to loosen the soil and uproot the plant. If the top of the plant has started to produce seeds, it should be removed from the area and disposed of to prevent any further spread.
- **Disposal:** Do not burn or compost wild parsnip plants that have been cut down or dug up. If possible, leave the stems to dry out completely at the site. Carefully dispose of plant material in black plastic bags and leave in direct sun for a week or more. Contact your municipality to determine if the bagged plants can be sent to your local landfill site.

For more information see [www.ontario.ca/document/wild-parsnip](http://www.ontario.ca/document/wild-parsnip)