

A great resource for information on poison hemlock

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Many of you read the Buckeye Yard and Garden Line and are familiar with this horticulture newsletter courtesy of OSU Extension professionals.

We made a big change this year to the newsletter and I think you will like it.

BYGL is designed to give you up-to-the minute, current horticulture information that you can use in your lawn and garden. We'll tell you about the plants that are doing great in Ohio landscapes, about the insects and other pests might be causing your plants problems, about wildlife management issues in your landscape, as well as a whole bunch of other horticulture-related items.

Instead of a weekly newsletter format, we are using a blog format and authors are posting whenever they notice something important happening in the landscape.

For instance, Hamilton County colleague Joe Boggs posted about poison hemlock on June 7. If you haven't heard about this plant, the chances are really good that you are at least seeing it in bloom in this area right now.

You may want to learn more about this plant and learn how to identify it because I am seeing more and more of it in the Miami Valley and in home landscapes and gardens.

Typically it's a weed that is found along roadsides and farmland. It usually likes streams and low-lying areas but has quickly adapted to our area soils.

I just happened to find one in my garden (hiding behind a tree) that was approximately five foot tall. How did that happen?

Why should you learn more? It happens to be one of the most deadly plants in North America. It is a non-native invasive weed that has foliage similar to wild carrot and wild parsnip.

However, poison hemlock has telltale purplish spots on the stems and the others don't.

Poison hemlock can lead to death if ingested. This applies to humans and animals, thus if it's found in hayfields and harvested in the bales, it could be problematic.

Wild parsnip also causes issues with gardeners and should be handled with care. All parts of the plants contain a substance called psoralen.

If working near the plant and you get juices on your skin, it can lead to a condition called phytophotodermatitis. When the juices on the skin are exposed to sunlight, the result is a reddening of the skin, a rash and in severe cases blisters.

Control of both of these plants can be done by hand-pulling (if populations are small) or a non-selective herbicide (i.e. glyphosate). Don't let it go to seed as it will spread abundantly.

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