

Conium maculatum

Common name:

Hemlock, Carrot fern, Poison Parsley,

Palatability to Livestock:

Moderate.

Toxicity to Goats:

High risk of toxicity.

Toxicity to Other Species:

All animals are susceptible, sheep and goats are more resistant.

Poisonous Principle:

- . Piperidine alkaloids, notably conine.
- . Destroyed by heat and drying.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Vomiting and diarrhoea,
- . Slow respiration and rapid pulse.
- . Mental confusion, convulsions, coma,
- . Death takes from 2 hours, to 2 days.
- . In humans, paralysis, loss of speech, muscle weakness, loss of sight.

Health and Production Problems;

- . Most affected animals will recover, but affected pregnant animals may later give birth to offspring with deformities of the skeleton.

Treatment;

- . Be aware of potential stock problems.
- . As for nicotine poisoning, try tannic acid followed by a purgative.
- . Induce vomiting, try activated charcoal.
- . Try low alcohol drinks, tea or coffee.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . Hand pull, wearing rubber gloves.
- . Slashing just before flowering may be effective, new growth may appear at the base.
- . Herbicide control, from seedling to flowering stage, try Group I or 2,4-D®,
- . This plant is declared “Noxious” in all states.

Comments:

- . Often mistaken for parsley.
- . A weed of roadsides, and waste spaces.
- . An erect, branching, annual or biennial herb, with a white, fleshy, parsnip-like taproot, growing up to 2 metres high, all plant is toxic.
- . Leaves form a basal rosette, pale green, with purplish patches, alternate and fern-like.
- . Gives off a mousy odour when damaged.
- . Stalks are hollow, with purple blotches.
- . White flowers with small, incurved petals, in dense clusters at the end of their stems.
- . Flowering August to December.
- . All parts are toxic, especially the seeds, even when dry.
- . Prefers moist areas, reproducing by seed; roots are long, white and fleshy.
- . Paralysis starts at the legs and progresses.
- . Death is usually caused by respiratory paralysis.
- . Native to Europe and central Asia, found in all states, more plentiful in cooler regions.



Picture: *Conium maculatum* Agdex cover 1999

Further Reading:

- . Everist. Poisonous Plants in Australia. 1981
- . Blood. Environmental Weeds Field Guide for SE Australia. CRC Weed Management Systems. 2003
- . Lamp and Collett. Field Guide to Weeds in Australia. 1976.
- . McBarron, Poisonous Plants, Handbook. 1983.
- . Parsons and Cuthbertson. Noxious Weeds in Australia 2001
- . Shepherd. Pretty but Poisonous. 2004.
- . Simmonds, Holst and Bourke. Palatability and Potential Toxicity of Australian Weeds to Goats. 2000
- . Wilson. Some Plants are Poisonous. 1997