Poison Hemlock Alert!

May Weeds of the month is a toxic plant that can sneak into a field or even your vegetable garden.

Gardeners should be advised that there is a toxic weed lurking in Kitsap County. This plant often is camouflaged or can mimic carrots, but it can be a deadly mistake to eat poison hemlock. Poison hemlock leaves resemble carrot tops. The major differences are Poison hemlocks gangly white root and purple spots on the stems. As the plant matures the stocks shoot up 4-6 feet towards the sky and fill with many little white flowers. The flowers, bloom between May and August, and grow in clusters in an umbrella-shaped appearance. Poison Hemlock is an extremely toxic plant and the toxin may remain in the plant for years after the plant dies. This plant is well known for its ability to cause paralysis and even death when ingested.

This toxic terror is starting to become more abundant throughout Kitsap County in gardens, along roadsides, and within wetlands. If you spot this plant in your area there are a few things you will need to do. First make sure to put on gloves and long sleeves before you attempt to pull the plant out. For small sites, pull or dig up plants. Do not leave flower heads or roots on the ground, as the plant can remain viable. Place all parts of the plant into a plastic bag and send to the landfill. Composting is not recommended as some research shows that the toxins may still be present through the composting process. For large sites contact the Weed Control Program for assistance.

Keep an eye out for this toxic invader, remove it quickly and let the noxious weed control board know about where you have seen poison hemlock. Contact The Noxious weed control program for more information: dcoggon@co.kitsap.wa.us