

WILD CHERVIL

Anthriscus sylvestris



Overview:

Wild chervil (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), a native to Europe, is classed as a biennial plant and is spread primarily through seed dispersal. Wild chervil is a popular plant found in packages of European wildflower mixes and has made its way to North America. It is most commonly found along roadsides and hedgerows in the north-eastern United States and can be found in various locations in South and Central Ontario.

Wild chervil (*Anthriscus sylvestris*(L.) Hoffm.) is an annual, biennial or short-lived perennial forb that produces small white flowers in umbrella-like clusters along 2 cm long stalks at the end of stems and grows to 0.3-1.8 m tall. Wild chervil is a prolific seed produce and each flower produces two joined, narrow 6-7mm long seeds that are green at first and mature to shiny brown. Fern-like leaves are softly hairy, triangular and divided into smaller leaflets. Wild chervil has thick taproots that spread aggressively, extending into the soil nearly 2 m and are very difficult to remove.

Habitat:

Wild chervil can be found in ditches, along roadsides, fencelines, stream banks and moist woods, and competes with pasture and hay crops—reducing forage and production.

Identification:

Wild Chervil is from the parsley family and therefore shares many of their qualities. This plant can grow to an average height of 1-4 feet, but on occasion has been seen to grow over 6 feet.

The stems are hollow, with soft hairs, particularly near the base. Each stem node has a fringe of hair. The Leaves are alternate and fern like, divided into many leaflets. They are nearly hairless with some hair on the lower surface.

The flowers are produced on the top of the stem as white umbels with 5 petals. The seeds are green, and turn a shiny dark brown as they mature. They are approximately 1/4 inch long.

Impact and Spread:

Wild chervil has the ability to out-compete native plants in ditches, woodlot edges and pasturelands. This plant can play host to a disease, which affects carrots, celery and parsnips.

Human activity, wind, water, birds and other wildlife are all factors in the spread of wild chervil seed. It is extremely hard to control because of its large taproot and is resistant to many herbicides.

This invader becomes unpalatable near maturity and livestock will avoid it. It is generally not problematic in cultivated crops, but it acts as a host for a disease that infects other plants in the same family, including carrots, parsnips, and celery. It is difficult to control because of its very deep root system. Wild chervil competes with other plants, shading out smaller plants.

Prevention:

Maintain desirable plant cover in pastures in dry environments by not overgrazing and do diligent monitoring of disturbed, high traffic areas for African rue establishment. Most seeds fall near the parent plant and are then carried by water flow or in mud attached to human, animal, or vehicle movement.

Prevention & Control:

Control of wild chervil includes hand-pulling or digging, but mature plants need to be removed below the crown to prevent resprouting. Mowing must be repeated before the plant sets seed. Chemical control is often precluded due the wet habitat wild chervil prefers. Cut and bag any flowering plants for burning or deep burial. Choose seed mixtures carefully and watch for this in its ingredient list, as it has been found in British wildflower seed mixes.

Wild Chervil is known to spread rapidly and aggressively along ditches, road right of ways, fencelines, and pasturelands. It is important to remove the entire plant

as leaving some pieces behind will result in resprouting. Repeated mowing of this plant before it has gone to seed can deplete the root reserve resulting in its eventual decline.

