

Western Water Hemlock, *Cicuta douglasii*



Identification: Perennial up to 2 meters tall. Stems with purple blotches. Stems are hairless and hollow, with compartments near the base. Alternate compound leaves, leaflets with toothy margins. Flowers in white-greenish umbrella-shaped umbels

Habitat: Shallow ponds, swamps and marshes, irrigation ditches.

Animals Affected: Humans and all livestock, but primarily cattle

Toxin Family: Cicutoxin (a neurotoxin) contained in all plant parts: leaves and stems highly toxic in spring, decreasing as plant matures. Root is especially toxic always.

Other: Causes rapid onset of muscle tremors and convulsions.

Death occurs within hours of consumption. **One of the most poisonous plants in N. America; removal of Western water hemlock from pastures should be a priority.** Plants are generally easily removed by pulling and should be burned. Plants should be removed before setting seed, as that is their primary reproductive tactic. Spraying can increase palatability before plant dies.

