

TOXIC INVASIVE POISON HEMLOCK IS SPREADING INTO US PARKS AND BACKYARD GARDENS

Poison Hemlock



What is poison hemlock?

Poison hemlock is a toxic plant, and all parts of the plant - the leaves, stem, fruit, and root - are poisonous, according to the [United States Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA). Poison hemlock has white flowers that grow in small clusters, and each flower eventually develops into a green, deeply ridged fruit that contains seeds. After the fruit ripens and matures, it turns a grayish brown color. Poison hemlock has a hollow stem with small purple spots, delicate leaves like parsley, and a white root (it's in the same family as parsnips and wild carrots).

Poison hemlock is in almost every state in the US, and per the USDA, it tends to grow along fence lines, in irrigation ditches, and in other moist places. It can also get up to three meters tall.

Is poison hemlock actually poisonous to humans?

Unfortunately, yes. The plant has a few toxic compounds, including coniine, and piperidine alkaloids.

If you accidentally brush up against poison hemlock while you're hiking or hanging outside, you should be OK (remember: the whole rash thing is a myth). But if you accidentally eat it or it gets in your body, Dr. Shafer says you'll notice a few symptoms, including:

- Feeling lightheaded
- Sleepiness
- Dilated pupils
- Dizziness
- Trembling