

The Dangers of Water Hemlock ***..... Susan Rightmyer***

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Water Hemlock is one of the most lethal plants in North America and it can be found in very moist areas, typically around ditches, rivers, streams, lakes and other marshy areas in the spring. While the entire plant is poisonous, the roots are especially toxic. Like poison ivy it has 3-5 leaves. Spotted water-hemlock is a native perennial plant that reproduces by seed and grows throughout Ontario, occurring in wet meadows, pastures, ditches, streams and rivers, and swampy areas.

Water Hemlock Poisoning in Dogs

A 3-year-old Border Collie was playing at a reservoir when she playfully ate a plant called water hemlock. Not long after, she lost all motor functions and passed out. Sadly, she passed away en route to the hospital. Water hemlock is not normally a plant that appeals to dogs however pet owners should be aware of how deadly water hemlock can be. Just a few leaves can kill a large dog within two hours. There have even been instances where dogs have been poisoned by the water that has been contaminated by water hemlock roots.



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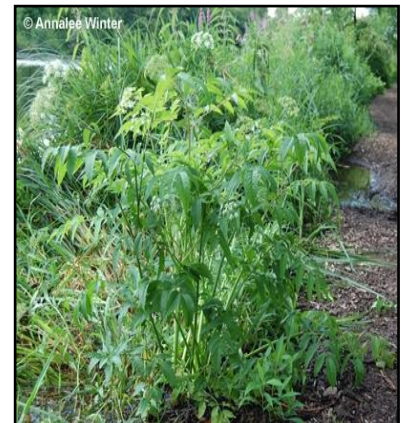
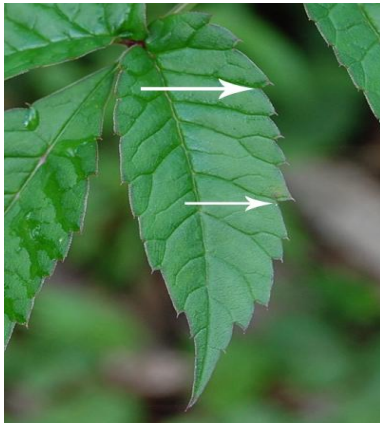
The highly toxic water hemlock plant has white flowers that bloom in the spring and it is usually found around moist areas. Its leaves are narrow and serrated.

CAUTION! Spotted water-hemlock is the **most poisonous of all Canadian plants** to both human beings and livestock, all parts of the plant being poisonous. Extreme care must be taken when pasturing areas where this plant grows, and in collecting wild greens, roots or seeds for human consumption.

Please visit the website for more information on toxicity. :

http://www.cbif.gc.ca/pls/pp/ppack.info?p_psn=41&p_type=all&p_sci=sci

CAUTION! Spotted water-hemlock **can be confused with other species** in the carrot family. It is important to be able to distinguish between this very poisonous species and other look-alikes that are not toxic. It is possible to mistake poison hemlock for other species, especially others in the carrot family. These species include; Angelica, Wild carrot (*daucus carota*), Giant hogweed (*heracleum mantegazzianum*), Water-parsnip (*sium suave*), Goutweed (*aegopodium podagraria*) Poison hemlock (*conium maculatum*) and Angelica (*angelica atropurpurea*).



Symptoms of Water Hemlock Poisoning:

If dogs consume water hemlock, symptoms appear within minutes and include drooling, muscle twitching and seizures. Pupils will appear dilated, and the dog will begin to convulse before experiencing paralysis & then death. If you know the dog has ingested water hemlock, immediately get to a vet. You may try to induce vomiting but note the toxin acts extremely quickly.

**{Note: Veins in each leaflet go to notches between teeth on the margins.}
Please share this story and help keep our dogs safe!**

If you have pets, it is a good idea to do a little research on plants you wish to introduce to your garden before falling victim to the attractive blooms of some unwitting specimens. A few pet problem garden plants are : Lily of the Valley, Castor Bean, Daffodils, Hosta, Ornamental Lillies, Milkweed, Morning Glory, Ivy, Tomato plants, Tulips, Yew. Indoor Plants : Aloe Vera, Amaryllis, Azalea, Baby's Breath, Begonia, Carnations, Oleander, Pothos, Pointsettia.