



Description: Herbaceous biennial or short-lived perennial. Rosettes grow close to the ground and bear leaves averaging six inches in height. The plant has a long, thick taproot. Depending on the habitat and growing conditions, individual flowering plants range to over four feet in height. Leaves are alternate, pinnately compound, branched, and have saw-toothed edges. Wild parsnip can cause phytophotodermatitis to the skin. If the plant juices come in contact with skin in the presence of sunlight, a rash and/or blistering can occur, as well as skin discoloration that may last several months to over a year. Frequently invades and modifies a variety of open habitats. Animals can also get parsnip burns if they have little hair and lightly pigmented skin through ingestion and contact. In Becker County the wild parsnip has bloomed at 8”.

Formula for Trouble: Everyone is sensitive to wild parsnip this is how it differs from poison ivy.

Wild Parsnip “sap” (photo-sensitizing chemicals in juice from green leaves, stems & seeds)

+ **Sensitive Skin** (arms, legs, torso, face, and neck- any place exposed to daylight usually not the palms of hands. Wet skin, sweat and heat increase the effect) (Livestock also reacts to ingesting plant)

+ **Ultraviolet Light** (present on sunny and cloudy days.)

+**Time** (24 to 48 hours after exposure redness, pain and blisters appear.)

= **Parsnip Burn** (Burn-like rash that, once healed, often leaves a brownish pigmentation that can last for years).

Control: Mechanical – cutting below surface, pulling plant and mowing (will reduce seed production but will not kill).

Herbicide – timely application of 2,4-D(rosettes in spring, Opensite or Chapparral, Telar, Escort, Overdrive, Telar & Escort, Milestone & Escort, or Banvel to plants in the rosette stage (August to October or late April to mid-May)

Resources: Illinois Nature Preserves Commission by Jill Kennay & George Fell, The nature Conservancy by Nancy Eckardt, Wisconsin Natural Resource Magazine by David J. Eagan, Marsha Watland BSWCD-funding National Fish & Wildlife Foundation

Photo Credit: Marsha Watland-BSWCD, Wisconsin Natural Resources –David Eagan