



Wild Caraway

Carum carvi

Provincial Designation:
Not Regulated*

*Noxious in several M.D./Counties



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Overview:

Wild caraway is a biennial plant, producing a low growing rosette of leaves in its first year of growth, and then a flowering stalk (bolt) in the second year – it can even bolt and flower a third year before dying. It develops a narrow, parsnip-like taproot with a black skin and white core. This is the same plant that produces the caraway spice used in rye breads and as an ingredient in some liquor. All parts of the plant are edible. Native to Eurasia, it has escaped cultivation as a spice crop in Canada.

Habitat:

Wild caraway grows in a wide variety of soil types, pH, and climates. It will successfully reproduce under deciduous forest canopy but seems intolerant of complete shade. Bolt-ing plants can tolerate some spring flooding and seedlings can survive light frosts.

Identification:

Stems: Are erect, branched, and grow 60

to 90 cm tall. There can be several stems per plant.

Leaves: Are alternate and very finely divid-ed (very carrot-like). The leaves of first-year rosettes can be very similar to yarrow, a native plant.

Flowers: Are white, but occasionally pink-ish, and occur in groups at the top of stems (compound umbels). Flowers hermaphro-ditic (having both male & female organs) and therefore self-fertile. Fruits (seeds) are crescent-shaped with ridges, and about 2 mm long.

Prevention:

Wild caraway is very difficult to detect when not in flower. Learn to recognize Wild caraway rosettes – early detection provides the best chances for eradication.

Control:

Grazing: It is not utilized by livestock and can quickly displace nearly all other vegeta-tion where infestations go uncontrolled. In-festations in forage crops have led to weed

seed dispersal in baled hay. Invasive plants should never be considered as forage.

Cultivation: Repeated cultivation before seed set are be effective. Hand pulling pre-bloom is also effective, especially in soft soils. After flowering the plants are very fragile and seeds are easily scattered – at this stage a plastic bag can be carefully placed over the mature plant, and closed tightly around the stem. Collected seed should be disposed of in landfill-bound garbage or thoroughly burned. Several years' effort is required to deplete the seed bank.

Mechanical: Repeated mowing is not effective, as plants re-bloom below cutting height.

Chemical: Currently no selective herbi-cides are registered for use on wild caraway. Always check product labels to ensure the herbicide is registered for use on the target plant in Canada by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency. Always read and follow label directions. Consult your local Agricul-tural Fieldman or Certified Pesticide Dis-penser for more information.

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Wild Caraway (Continued)

Biological: None researched to date.



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