

Queen Anne's Lace

It seems that Queen Anne's lace (*Daucus carota*) (QAL) is blooming early this year. Maybe with the wet spring, it got a head start, too. Either way, Jim and I have spent several hours a day for several days pulling this aggressive, weedy, non-native plant.



It's hard to take a photo of the whole plant because they are "airy" and the green just blends in with the surroundings.

Also known as Wild Carrot, QAL, produces copious amount of seed, which is part of its success in taking over areas where it is not controlled. This plant came to the US from Europe and is the predecessor to our cultivated carrots. When you pull it, the root has a distinct carrot aroma. It provides some medicinal qualities for humans, which is probably the reason it was brought to America.



Each little white flower is part of this whole flower head.



This is what it looks like when the flowers start to set seed. They curl into a ball and each of those little white flowers develops into a seed. You can see how prolific a seed producer one plant can be.

I have found pulling it with the assistance of a [Parsnip Predator](#) to be the best way to remove it from a prairie or areas of patchy QAL growth. It's a biennial so once it flowers, that plant has spent its life. We wait until it is just about ready to set seed, then we pull it. If you cut it

before that, it continues growing and getting bushier and bushier around the base, shading out any native seedlings that may be wanting to grow. If we were trying to eradicate from a field where it had become prevalent, I would mow it for several years after it bloomed rather than use the Parsnip Predator. When working with a large scale infestation, mowing is merely a triage move so you are not adding more seed to the seedbank. So, to handle a large scale project, chunk off pieces to herbicide or pull, and mow the rest to keep it from going to seed. I've found the herbicide, Opensight, to be VERY effective in killing these plants.



This is an example of how bushy the QAL can be when cut before it blooms. It also supports a few more flower heads when it becomes this bushy.



The base of the stem moves down to a single root so using a Parsnip Predator to sever that root is fairly easy. Even the bushy plants only have a single root.

The seed bank is reported to persist for 2-5 years. We had quite a bit of QAL on the edges of the 5-Acre Prairie the first 2 years after it was planted. I pulled these and now have only a smattering here and there. Although not a scientific study, it does demonstrate that this plant can be removed and controlled from native areas.

While QAL provides a cover for wildlife, it has little value for wildlife beyond that. I have seen pollinators searching on the flowers, but this alone is not reason enough to maintain this plant. A diversity of native plants that bloom throughout the growing season is much more helpful to pollinators than the short time QAL is blooming. And the native plants provide so much more to wildlife; they serve as food, habitat,

reproductive hosts, and provide cover.