

**Wood County Land and
Water Conservation
Department**

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WOOD COUNTY
LAND AND WATER
CONSERVATION
DEPARTMENT

**Wild Parsnip
Look-Alikes**
2020

QUIZ: Which one of these is wild parsnip?

A



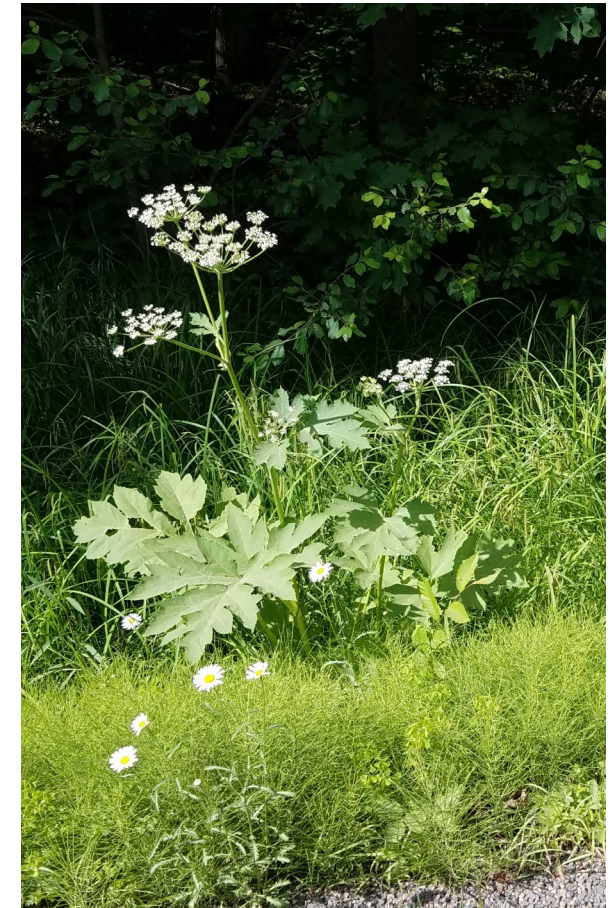
B



C



Correct Answer: C. A is Elderberry and B is Golden Alexander.



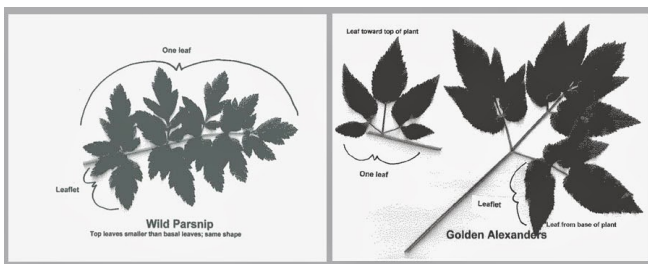
Wild Parsnip vs Golden Alexander

Wild parsnip flowers can be confused with golden alexanders, a beneficial native plant. Golden Alexander leaves have small teeth along the edge and an overall palm-shaped outline. Golden alexanders are in bloom before wild parsnip and are also smaller.

Wild Parsnip



Golden Alexander



Cow Parsnip

Both wild parsnip and cow parsnip belong to the carrot family, and both can cause skin burns. Unlike wild parsnip, cow parsnip is native to North America. This means populations of cow parsnip will stay in check and won't take over large areas. The plant can be 5 to 8 feet tall.

Cow parsnip (pictured above) has white flowers while wild parsnip has yellow flowers. Once cow parsnip starts to turn to seed, some can confuse the two because the flower color starts to fade. Difference can be seen in the leaf shape. It looks like an open palm while wild parsnip leaves look oblong.

Beware of the invasive Giant Hogweed pictured below. It looks similar to cow parsnip, but can grow up to 15-20 feet! It is not in central WI yet. It is said to burn worse than wild parsnip.



Other Look-Alikes



Poison Hemlock



Water Hemlock



Elderberry



Wild Carrot
(Queen Anne's Lace)