I never expected to be removing poison hemlock from a backyard in a suburban Midwest neighborhood. Yet, there I was, fully covered up in long sleeves, gloves and jeans while the temperature climbed to near 90 degrees.

The first day we discovered the dainty pretty white flowers in the garden area, I hoped it was some sort of useful herb or weed, left from the previous tenants. I took a few pictures
and tried to identify the plants. Most of the garden was covered with dandelions, which are totally awesome, and some plantain. Both of these “weeds” hold lots of healthy nutrients and healing properties.

The hemlock is not such a good plant. First, ingesting any parts of it can lead to serious illness and death.

**What is Poison Hemlock?**

There is more than one type of hemlock but none of them are something you want around your family and pets. These plants are invasive, in addition to poisonous. The three to watch for are called Poison Hemlock, Water Hemlock, and Bulbiferous Hemlock. In addition another bad plant to find in your garden is called Giant Hogweed.

Poison Hemlock has clusters of tiny white flowers loosely held together by the stems. The leaves are fernlike and to me looked like many other plants. I am glad that I have friends who are much more knowledgeable about plants. I shared my photos and one friend gave me this link to a page about poisonous plants with [white lacey flowers](#).

It’s important to correctly identify plants before assuming that they are useful herbs or edible weeds. Consult a good local plant guide and [compare the stems, leaves and flowers](#).
How do you Start Removing Poison Hemlock from Your Yard?

I followed the steps below to ensure my own safety and that of the pets and children in the home.

1. Gather large plastic bags for containing the plants.
2. Pruners, garden rake, dust mask, thick gloves
3. Wear long sleeves, long pants, socks and shoes.

Some of the plants were getting quite tall. I started by cutting small sections at a time and placing them in the large trash bags. I tried to be careful to not have the plants touch my clothes. This plant totally freaked me out! After all, this is the same plant that the American Indians used on the poison arrows. It is also the same poison used to eliminate political enemies in ancient Greece.

Protecting your skin while removing the plants is important.
The plant stem has a hollow core in some spots and contains a juice. It can cause photosensitive burns to skin. This plant is just not friendly!

Watching for Poison Hemlock to Return

Once I started removing the plants, I was able to see just how invasive this plant is. Everywhere I looked there were small starts of the Poison Hemlock plant. I am not sure that I made a huge dent in the Hemlock population in the garden. I think it will be coming up for a long time. Now that we know what we are looking at, I am sure my family members will be getting rid of it frequently.

After I was done pulling the Poison Hemlock, Poison Ivy, and assorted other invasive weeds that had taken over the garden, I made sure I cleaned up all the clippings and bagged them for the trash. Normally, in my barnyard and farm we would add the weeds to the compost pile. In the case of Poison Hemlock, composting is not recommended.

Clean the clippers used with soap and water and wipe down with alcohol wipes after the job is done. Poison Ivy oils can get on everything and be transferred by touching the gloves and
tools. I also washed all the clothing and gloves, just to be sure!

Did I over react to finding and removing poison hemlock? I don’t know. I am an unsure gardener and when I read that a plant is poison to ingest or inhale it makes me uncomfortable. This is how I handled removing Poison Hemlock in the yard of my family member. If you have tackled this task, please share what you did in the comments.

More about Poison Hemlock from Grow Forage Cook Ferment

Removing Poison Ivy from Tenth Acre Farm