

# New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs of GFWC

Shirley A. Holly, President

Love, Loyalty, Friendship – The Bonds of Volunteerism

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There's not a state in the country that doesn't have poison hemlock growing in it. There have been warnings about this everywhere on social media.

Basically, it looks like an ordinary weed but poison hemlock is one of the most dangerous plants on the planet.

It looks innocuous with a little pretty white flower on it resembling Queen Anne's lace, but if you pick some of it or walk through it and shake the dust around and inhale it you can actually get pretty sick.

Symptoms such as sleepiness, lightheadedness, dilated pupils, trembling and dizziness can begin showing as early as 30 minutes after ingesting the plant. But even touching it can cause symptoms— from COVID-19 symptoms to full-blown lung and/or a heart failure.

Last spring, the borough of Watchung, N.J., released a "hemlock poison plant advisory" warning residents that the lethal weed is spreading into backyards and public parks.

The best way to prevent any poisoning from hemlock is to remove the plants. But I would leave this to the experts. You've got to remove the entire root because if you cut or mow mature hemlock plants they can re-sprout or emit toxic fumes. Experts also warn that if you must interact with poison hemlock plants, make sure you wear gloves, facemasks, and protective clothing and wrap up any plants in plastic or place them in plastic bags and then immediately throw them in the trash.