

## *Pastinaca sativa* wild parsnip

### Why Observe?

*Pastinaca sativa* is a harmful invasive plant in North America. In addition to degrading natural habitats and crowding out native plants, its sap causes severe skin burns. Managing *P. sativa* must be timed to coincide with life cycle stages. For example, mowing is only effective within a narrow time window: too early and plants re-sprout, too late and plants bearing seeds spread the infestation. Your observations as part of the Pesky Plant Trackers campaign are needed to understand this plant's phenology and help plan effective management.



### Tips for Identification

Always wear long sleeves, long pants and gloves that protect the skin from contact with the plant's sap. *Pastinaca sativa*'s alternate leaves are pinnately compound. Leaflets are coarsely, irregularly toothed. Mature plant (year 2 or 3) has branched, hollow, grooved stalks. Flowers are arranged in umbels, chartreuse in color, and have 5 curled petals. Ripe fruits are ¼ inch long, oval, and winged, with darkened resin canals visible.

Be aware there is variation from individual to individual within a species, so your plant may not look exactly like the one pictured. If you are uncertain whether or not a phenophase is occurring, report a "?" for its status until it becomes clear what you are observing after subsequent visits.



## Image Needed

email  
photos@usanpn.org

### Initial growth

New growth of the plant is visible after a period of no growth (winter or drought), either from above-ground buds with green tips, or new green or white shoots breaking through the soil surface. Growth is considered "initial" on each bud or shoot until the first leaf has fully unfolded. For seedlings, "initial" growth includes the presence of the one or two small, round or elongated leaves (cotyledons) before the first true leaf has unfolded.



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### Leaves

One or more live, fully unfolded leaves are visible on the plant. For seedlings, consider only true leaves and do not count the one or two small, round or elongated leaves (cotyledons) that are found on the stem almost immediately after the seedling germinates. Do not include fully dried or dead leaves.



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### Flowers or flower buds

One or more fresh open or unopened flowers or flower buds are visible on the plant. Include flower buds or inflorescences that are swelling or expanding, but do not include those that are tightly closed and not actively growing (dormant). Also do not include wilted or dried flowers.



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### Open flowers

One or more open, fresh flowers are visible on the plant. Flowers are considered "open" when the reproductive parts (male stamens or female pistils) are visible between or within unfolded or open flower parts (petals, floral tubes or sepals). Do not include wilted or dried flowers.



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### Fruits

One or more fruits are visible on the plant. For *Pastinaca sativa*, the fruit is flattened and seed-like, with two tiny fruits joined tightly together, and changes from green to yellowish to tan or light brown and splits into two one-seeded segments.



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### Ripe fruits

One or more ripe fruits are visible on the plant. For *Pastinaca sativa*, a fruit is considered ripe when it has turned tan or light brown.

**Phenophases not pictured:** Recent fruit or seed drop