

Beauty, Beast, Flavor, and Feast: the Celery Family in Maryland

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Rattlesnake Master, Snakeroot, Coyote Thistle, Giant Hogweed, Poison Hemlock. These names suggest a group of plants worth paying attention to. Also known as the carrot or parsley family, most members are aromatic. There are desirable edible species like carrot, celery, fennel, and parsnip as well as culinary herbs like caraway, chervil, cilantro, dill, and parsley; and spices like coriander. But the family also has less welcome members including highly poisonous Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), Water Hemlock (*Cicuta maculata*) and Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*). MNPS chose to feature Apiaceae in 2024 for its diversity, beauty, and ecological importance.

An older Latin name for the group is Umbelliferae, which translates to ‘bearing umbels’. Umbels are umbrella-like inflorescences composed of small flowers on stalks that radiate from a central point; they are a distinguishing feature of the family. According to the Maryland Biodiversity Project, there are about 54 species of Apiaceae in Maryland, including 36 native and 18 non-native (5 invasive) species (see list on page 6). Thirteen

species are designated as ‘Species of Conservation Concern’ with 5 listed as Endangered in Maryland. Two of the 5 State Endangered species are also Federally Endangered: Harperella (*Ptilimnium nodosum*)—an aquatic plant of riparian areas found in Allegheny and Washington counties, and Canby’s Dropwort (*Tiedemannia canbyi*)—found in only one locality on the eastern shore.

Apiaceae includes many attractive and ecologically important species. The elusive and tiny Harbinger-of-Spring (*Erigenia bulbosa*) is one of the first spring wildflowers to emerge and is worth kneeling in wet soil to get a close look at. Hairy Angelica (*Angelica venenosa*), Cow Parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*), and Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*) are just a few of the species that adorn Maryland’s natural

Herbs are the leafy part of a plant (e.g., basil, cilantro, parsley, rosemary), either fresh or dried. Spices are from fruits, seeds, bark, stems, and roots (e.g., black pepper, coriander, cinnamon, ginger).

areas and provide ecological services for pollinators and wildlife. Consider incorporating members of the Celery Family in your home landscape.

Learn how to recognize harmful invasives—Poison Hemlock and Giant Hogweed and be on the lookout for other invasive Umbelliferae such as Bishop’s Goutweed (*Aegopodium podagraria*), Queen Anne’s Lace or Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), and the aquatic plant Java Dropwort (*Oenanthe aquatica*). Report invasive species in the field using the EDDMapS app (see p. 17). While you’re at it, take time to enjoy the anise-scented Smooth Sweet-cicely (*Osmorhiza longistylis*) and Wild Chervil (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) by crushing a bit of leaf between your fingers.

Because many species of the celery family resemble others, it’s important to be certain of identification before consuming or even touching a plant, in the case of the poisonous species. For help identifying unknown plants, try the iNaturalist app (see p. 16) or the Virginia Flora app (floraofvirginia.org/flora-app/) which includes keys. We hope your studying goes well because there might be a quiz in the next issue of *Marilandica*!

continued on page 6

A Tale of Two Invasives: Spreading Hedge Parsley (*Torilis arvensis*) and Queen Anne’s Lace (*Daucus carota*) join forces in a site along railroad tracks in Alexandria, VA. Photo by R.H. Simmons.



Harbinger-of-spring (*Erigenia bulbosa*), one of our earliest and tiniest spring wildflowers, Sharpsburg, Maryland, March 10, 2024. Photo by Jil Swearingen

Maryland Apiaceae (Celery Family)

The following list of species is from the Maryland Biodiversity Project and can be used as a checklist when you go in the field. Rare, Threatened, or Endangered species (Species of Conservation Concern), are given State (S) and Global (G) status rankings to indicate the level of threat to their continued existence. For an explanation of these rankings please refer to *List of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Plants of Maryland* (March 2021).

NATIVE SPECIES (36)

SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN (13)

- Great Angelica** *Angelica atropurpurea* SH/G5
Filmy Angelica *Angelica triquinata* S1/G5
Hairy Angelica *Angelica venenosa*
A Hare's Ear *Bupleurum rotundifolium*
Spadeleaf *Centella asiatica* S3/G5
Spreading Chervil *Chaerophyllum procumbens* var. *procumbens*
Wild Chervil *Chaerophyllum procumbens* var. *shortii*
Hairy-fruit Chervil *Chaerophyllum tainturieri*
Bulb-bearing Water Hemlock *Cicuta bulbifera* S1/G5
Spotted Water Hemlock *Cicuta maculata* var. *maculata*
Canadian Honewort *Cryptotaenia canadensis*
Harbinger-of-spring *Erigenia bulbosa*
Marsh Rattlesnake-master *Eryngium aquaticum*
Rattlesnakemaster *Eryngium yuccifolium* var. *yuccifolium* SH/G5
Cow Parsnip *Heracleum maximum* S3/G5
Canadian Licorice-root *Ligusticum canadense* SH/G4
Eastern Grasswort *Lilaeopsis chinensis*
Hairy Sweet-cicely *Osmorhiza claytonii*

- Smooth Sweet-cicely** *Osmorhiza longistylis*
Stiff Cowbane *Oxypolis rigidior*
Burnet-saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga*
Mock Bishopweed *Ptilimnium capillaceum*
Harperella *Ptilimnium nodosum* S1/G2 LE
Canadian Black-snakeroot *Sanicula canadensis* var. *canadensis*
Maryland Black-snakeroot *Sanicula marilandica* S3/G5
Clustered Black-snakeroot *Sanicula odorata*
Large-fruited Sanicle *Sanicula trifoliata* S3/G4
Hemlock Water Parsnip *Sium suave*
Yellow Pimpernel *Taenidia integerrima*
Mountain Parsley *Taenidia montana* S2/G3
Hairy-joint Meadow Parsnip *Thaspium barbinode*
Purple Meadow Parsnip *Thaspium trifoliatum* var. *trifoliatum* S1/G5 T5
Canby's Dropwort *Tiedemannia canbyi* S1/G2 LE
Heartleaf Alexanders *Zizia aptera*
Golden Alexanders *Zizia aurea* S3/G5
Meadow Alexanders *Zizia trifoliata*

NON-NATIVE SPECIES (18)

INVASIVE SPECIES(5)*

- Bishop's Goutweed** *Aegopodium podagrarium**
Dill *Anethum graveolens*
Bur Chervil *Anthriscus caucalis*
Wild Chervil *Anthriscus sylvestris*
Wild Celery *Apium graveolens*
Common Caraway *Carum carvi*
Poison Hemlock *Conium maculatum**
Marsh Parsley *Cyclospermum leptophyllum*
Wild Carrot/Queen Anne's Lace *Daucus carota**
Snakeroot Coyote Thistle *Eryngium campestre*
Sweet Fennel *Foeniculum vulgare*
Giant Hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum**
Masterwort *Imperatoria ostruthium*
Java Water dropwort *Oenanthe javanica**
Wild Parsnip *Pastinaca sativa*
Moon-carrot *Sesili lebanotis*
Spreading Hedge-parsley *Torilis arvensis*
Erect Hedge-parsley *Torilis japonica*

REFERENCES

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- Swearingen, J.M. and J.P. Fulton. 2022. *Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas*. Passiflora Press. 200 pp.