

NEWS RELEASE  
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## VELCRO PLANT

### BACKYARD HORTICULTURE

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One of the attractive plants now appearing in Mariposa County in great numbers has the interesting common name of “Velcro Plant.” It produces small, about ¼ inch, burrs with little barbs that can seemingly stick to anything. Dogs, cats, livestock, and clothes – all appear to almost attract the small seeds. This adaptation is great for the survival of the plant, but is a nuisance for most everything else.

The leaves have the appearance of finely divided parsley leaves, and in fact, it is placed in the same plant family. It also looks similar to hemlock, but is not listed in most reference books as being poisonous.

At least one species is properly called *Torilis arvensis*, hedge parsley. This weed is spreading in foothill regions, but control is possible. With timing depending on elevation, Velcro plant produces very small white flowers in a head called an umbel. Once mature, the flowers produce the barbed seeds. Before seeds form is the best time to attempt control. At the time of flowering, after this annual plant has expended most of its energy, mowing may reduce the production of viable seeds.

Chemical controls depend on surrounding desirable plants. If non-selective chemicals are acceptable, glyphosate (“Round-Up,” others) will control Velcro plant, but also kills any surrounding vegetation contacted. A more selective chemical is 2-4D, which only kills

broadleaved plants, sparing most grasses. Since Velcro plant is an annual, herbicidal soap should also offer control, but it also is non-selective and can kill grasses if sprayed.

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