

Q: This very pretty, white lacy blossomed plant has appeared in my front yard. It gets to be about 2' in height, and I was happy to see it until the seeds appeared. It has horrible Velcro like little seeds that are almost impossible to get off of the dog or off of my socks. What is this and how can I get rid of it?

A: Don't hesitate—run outside immediately and cut off every bit of the plant that you can see. Don't compost the seeds unless you have a very hot compost pile. The seeds of *Torilis arvensis*, (hedge nettle, spreading hedge parsley or beggars ticks), are just maturing this time of year. The seeds spread by attaching themselves to animals and people and have moved throughout this area, showing up along trails, streets and in flower beds. The foliage is delicate, with multiply-compound leaflets resembling parsley or chervil. The white compound umbels of flowers that are held well above the foliage look a little like Queen Anne's lace. It is the bristly seeds that have enabled this plant to make it onto the noxious weed lists of several states. The seeds are difficult to remove and easy to spread around. Like most weedy plants, *Torilis a.* is tolerant of most soils. Because of the deceptively delicate foliage, many gardeners are not aggressive about pulling it out, which is easily done in the spring. This time of the year it has a substantial carrot-like root that is more difficult to remove. If you cannot dig it up, be certain to remove the fruiting seeds heads before they spread. Regular removal combined with soil solarization to inhibit the seeds are the best control methods.

Below: Plant sketch credit http://www.coestatepark.com/torilis_arvensis.htm

