QUIZ: Which one of these is wild parsnip?

A  
B  
C  

Correct Answer: C. A is Elderberry and B is Golden Alexander.
Both wild parsnip and cow parsnip belong to the carrot family, and both can cause skin burns. Unlike wild parsnip, cow parsnip is native to North America. This means populations of cow parsnip will stay in check and won’t take over large areas. The plant can be 5 to 8 feet tall.

Cow parsnip (pictured above) has white flowers while wild parsnip has yellow flowers. Once cow parsnip starts to turn to seed, some can confuse the two because the flower color starts to fade. Difference can be seen in the leaf shape. It looks like an open palm while wild parsnip leaves look oblong.

**Beware** of the invasive Giant Hogsweed pictured below. It looks similar to cow parsnip, but can grow up to 15-20 feet! It is not in central WI yet. It is said to burn worse than wild parsnip.