

Invasive Species Alert

Giant Hogweed



Heracleum mantegazzianum

The spread of non-native invasive plants has serious ecological, economic and social/health impacts. CRISP appreciates the cooperation of all residents in addressing the issue of Giant Hogweed on private property and reporting it on public lands.

A priority invasive of concern with serious human health risks.

Why is Giant Hogweed a problem?

- **PUBLIC HEALTH HAZARD:** risk of severe skin burns, scarring and temporary or permanent blindness in humans.
- Watery sap in the stalk, stem and leaves is toxic, causing dermatitis after contact with sunlight (effects within hours or days). Scarring can last from months to lifetime.
- See Worksafe BC Giant Hogweed Alert for first aid www.worksafebc.com
- **ECOSYSTEM RISK:** outcompetes native plants and causes soil erosion on steep slopes and stream banks

What does it look like?

- Large plant up to 6 m tall with deeply lobed leaves and umbrella-shaped white flower heads up to 1 m across.

Giant Hogweed is often confused with native Cow Parsnip (much smaller, less than 3 m tall)

Leaves: Large, very deeply lobed with jagged edges; up to 2.5 m long.



Giant Hogweed

Leaves: Wider leaflet, less lobed and jagged than Giant Hogweed; up to 40 cm long.



Cow Parsnip

Flowers: Blooms in June to July: large, umbrella-shaped white flower head up to 1 m.



Giant Hogweed

Flowers: Blooms in May to July: flower heads are much smaller to only 0.2 m diameter.



Cow Parsnip

Stalks: Stalks are purple spotted or streaked, hollow and 5 to 10 cm in diameter. Stiff hairs.



Giant Hogweed

Stalks: Stalks are usually green but lower stems may also have some purple. Soft hairs.



Cow Parsnip

Distribution

- Native to Asia. Invasions in BC primarily southwestern BC, including Vancouver Island.

Spread the *Word*
Not the *Weed*

Phone: 1-888-933-3722

Email: crispcoordinator@gmail.com

Online: www.reportaweedbc.ca

For more information on CRISP see: www.crispinvasives.ca

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Giant Hogweed



Habitat and biology

- Perennial plant from the Apiaceae (carrot or parsley) family.
- Mature plants flower in May, producing up to 100,000 seeds (viable in soil to 15 years).
- Reproduces by seeds, possibly vegetative reproduction (from buds on rootstalks).
- Found especially along ditches, roadsides, riparian areas, open forests, marine shorelines and disturbed sites.
- Large taproot will rapidly re-sprout if mowed.

What should you do?

Please report any sightings of this plant to the contacts below.

- **Spread the word, not the weed:** don't purchase, grow or trade Giant Hogweed.
- **Remove:** use the best control methods (below) to eliminate this plant.
- **Dispose:** of all plant parts in a proper manner (below).
- **Soil and Gravel:** use soil and gravel that are not contaminated and only removal soil from infested sites with safe disposal/treatment plan to avoid further spread.
- **Stop seed spread:** brush off clothing, tires, equipment before leaving infested area.
- **Monitor:** for several years, return to the site in spring and summer to continue treatment.
- **Replant:** after effectively eliminating this species over time, replant with non-invasive plants (such as appropriate native species).
- **Caution: wear protective clothing when in contact with this plant:**
 - Full face protection and heavy, water-resistant gloves (dispose of immediately afterwards).
 - Waterproof cover-alls with long sleeves or long sleeved shirt and pants that are not cotton or linen (sap can soak through), thicker clothing so plant hairs don't penetrate.
 - Wash clothing and tools after contact.

Small Populations (i.e. < 25 plants)

- **Manual removal:** remove young plants by gently hand pulling to remove all roots. A small hand tool can be used to ease out the roots.
- For large, mature plants cut the stem near the base, then dig out the roots, focus on central root and remove at least 8 to 12 cm below soil surface.
- For all manual removal, care should be taken to minimize soil disturbance which can encourage seeds to germinate.
- Ideally, remove in spring and repeat as required in early summer.
- If removing late during flowering season, cut, bag and dispose of flower-heads first.
- Mulching over the area disturbed by the removal may be beneficial.

Large Populations

- Contact CRISP for more information

Proper Disposal

- Best option: place all plant parts in garbage bags labelled "Invasive Species" and take to Hartland Landfill.
- Disposal may also be available through some local governments
- **DO NOT COMPOST!** Flowers can still form viable seeds after removal.

Photo Credits: District of Saanich, C. Richman, Oregon Dept. of Agriculture

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