

What is Giant Hogweed?

Giant Hogweed is an invasive plant species brought to North America as an ornamental garden specimen from the Caucasus Mountains in west central Asia.

Giant hogweed is a monocarpic perennial, meaning the same plant will grow back year after year, but completely dies once it has gone to flower and set seed. It can grow to a height of 5 to 6-metres.

It thrives in moist soils such as riverbanks and wetlands and disturbed areas such as vacant lots, uncultivated or waste areas, roadways and agricultural fields.

Environmental Impact

Giant hogweed is so large and grows so quickly that it out competes native plants for resources like space, water, and sunlight and nutrients. It has no predators.



Giant Hogweed Mapping Program

The Municipality of Clarington, Ganaraska Conservation Authority (GRCA) and Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA) have teamed up to manage the spread of giant hogweed in our community.

We need your help to put out the “Unwelcome Mat” for this unwanted visitor.

Report your giant hogweed sightings or any invasive plant in the community, by calling the Invading Species Hotline below.

Your reports will contribute to a mapping project to identify hotspots and prioritize management activities for invasive species.

Report a Sighting
Invading Species Hotline:
1-800-563-7711 or
EDDMaps.org/ontario

For more information, please visit the Invading Species Awareness program at www.invadingspecies.com

Clarington

Giant Hogweed

An Unwelcome Visitor



Why You Should Care

Giant hogweed is dangerous only when skin is exposed directly to the sap.

The plants toxins can cause severe skin irritation when the skin is exposed to sunlight. Reactions can occur from a half hour to three days after initial contact and may include welts, rashes, and blistering followed by permanent pigmented scarring.

The sap is found in the leaves, stalk, flower and roots of the plant, making it dangerous to handle without training or protective equipment.

Contact with the sap can occur easily by brushing against any bruised or broken part of the plant, or touching tools or equipment used to control it.

If you come into contact with giant hogweed, wash the affected areas immediately with soap and cool water, do not touch your eyes, eliminate exposure to sun and seek medical advice.

If your pet comes into contact with giant hogweed, cover any exposed skin and, while wearing gloves, wash your pet with soap and cool water. Eliminate its exposure to sun. Seek advice from your veterinarian.

Identification Guide

Flowers

Giant hogweed blooms between July and August. Flower heads form a large umbrella shape and grow up to 1-metre in diameter. It has more than 50 ray flowers per stem. It produces flowers between two and five years old. After it flowers the plant will die.



Stalks

Giant hogweed stalks are hairy or bristly and have purple streaks, spots, lines and/or blotches. It can grow up to five metres in height.



Leaves

Giant hogweed leaves are shiny and large. They have deeply serrated edges like a jagged saw.



Look Alike Species

There are a number of species that look similar to giant hogweed.

Cow Parsnip

Flowers: White umbrella like flower. Can grow up to 20 cm wide and has 15 to 30 rays per flower

Stalks: 5 cm in diameter. Hairy stem. Can grow up to 2.5 m high

Leaves: Three irregularly toothed leaflets. Leaves are distinct from giant hogweed. Cow Parsnip is native and contains toxins



Angelica

Flowers: Globe like flower, reaching 25 cm across. 15 to 40 rays per flower.

Stalks: Purple or purple blotched. Grows up to 2.5 m high

Leaves: Compound with 3 to 5 leaflets per division
Angelica is native and is non-toxic



Wild Parsnip

Flowers: Flowers are yellow in umbrella shape. 15 to 25 rays per flower.

Stalks: Green hairless stem. 1 to 1.6 m in height

Leaves: Divided with about 9 leaflets. Up to 45 cm long and 15 cm across
Wild Parsnip is invasive and contains toxins

