



Giant Hogweed

healthful

What is Giant Hogweed?

- It looks similar to cow parsnip, but poses a serious threat.
- It can grow 4.5 to 6 metres (15 to 20 feet) in height.
- Its leaves are nearly 1.5 metres (5 feet) wide and feature hairs on their underside.
- Its hollow stem has dark reddish-purple splotches and coarse white hair.
- It can produce thousands of seeds.

Why is it dangerous?

- Giant Hogweed's danger lies in its clear and watery sap. If the sap from a broken stem or crushed leaf, root, flower or seed comes into contact with skin, it can cause severe burns, blistering and painful sores when the skin is exposed to sunlight.
- If even a small amount of sap comes into contact with the eyes, it can lead to temporary or permanent blindness.

What to do if you are exposed to Giant Hogweed

- Wash affected areas immediately.
- Keep the affected area out of the sun.
- Seek medical advice.

To view photos of Giant Hogweed, visit www.eohu.ca.
Click on the "Environment" tab and
then on the "Giant Hogweed" button listed under "Topics".

What to do if you find Giant Hogweed on your property

To remove Giant Hogweed from your property, you must take special precautions:

- Wear protective clothing, including gloves, long sleeves, pants, and eye protection, rain coat and boots.
- Avoid getting sap on your skin.
- Immediately remove any flower heads to prevent seed growth and dispersal.
- Sever the plant roots 8 – 12 cm below the soil surface.
- Dispose of all plant parts in double-bagged garbage bag, seal the bag and **DO NOT COMPOST or put it in your yard waste.**
- Return to plant site periodically to remove any new plant growth.
- Wash the clothes you wore to remove the plant afterwards (avoid contact with soiled clothing or tools).

What to do if you find Giant Hogweed in a public place or park

- Inform your municipality.

Questions?

613-933-1375 or
1 800 267-7120
Ask for the Health Line.

Giant Hogweed Hits Eastern Ontario

Giant Hogweed, a toxic plant that can burn and cause permanent blindness, is raising concern all over the country. Recent confirmed findings within the Five Eastern Counties have the Eastern Ontario Health Unit (EOHU) warning residents to be on the lookout.

Originally from Asia, Giant Hogweed can grow 15 to 20 feet (4.5 to 6 metres) in height. Its leaves are nearly 5 feet (1.5 metres) wide and feature hairs on their underside. The plant's hollow stem has dark reddish-purple splotches and coarse white hair. Incredibly, one plant can have thousands of seeds. To view photos of the Giant Hogweed, visit the homepage of the EOHU's website at www.eohu.ca.

Giant Hogweed's danger lies in its clear and watery sap. If the sap from a broken stem or crushed leaf, root, flower or seed comes into contact with skin, it can cause severe burns, blistering and painful sores when the skin is exposed to sunlight. Plus, contact with the eyes can lead to temporary or permanent blindness.

"All residents should be cautious. But I would like outdoor workers, including road maintenance crews cutting roadside ditches, lawn and garden workers, as well as outdoor recreationalists to be extra careful," explains Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, Medical Officer of Health.

If you come in contact with Giant Hogweed, wash affected areas immediately and keep the affected area out of the sun and seek medical advice. To remove hogweed from your property, you must take special precautions:

- Wear protective clothing, including gloves, long sleeves, pants, and eye protection, rain coat and boots.
- Avoid getting sap on your skin.
- Immediately remove any flower heads to prevent seed growth and dispersal.
- Sever the plant roots 8 – 12 cm below the soil surface.
- Dispose of all plant parts in double-bagged garbage bag, seal the bag and DO NOT COMPOST or put it in your yard waste.
- Return to plant site periodically to remove any new plant growth.
- Wash the clothes you wore to remove the plant afterwards (avoid contact with soiled clothing or tools).

If you see Giant Hogweed in a public area, the Eastern Ontario Health Unit asks that you please inform your municipality.