

Giant Hogweed, an invasive plant, has been identified in our region. Residents are cautioned that if touched, the plant can cause skin to become severely irritated.

IDENTIFICATION

SIZE	A large plant, growing up to 4.5 - 6 meters tall.
LEAVES	Deeply incised, hairs on underside are stiff, dense, stubby, and can exceed 2.5 m in length.
STEMS	Dark reddish purple blotches on the stalks.
FLOWERS	Large white “umbrella-like” flower clusters.

Giant Hogweed, an invasive and large plant is easily mistaken for Cow Parsnip, a similiar looking smaller plant growing on the south BC coast. The leaves and stems can help to identify Giant Hogweed.

Cow Parsnip (Heracleum Maximum)

Cow parsnip leaves are NOT shiny, are broader and less serrated than giant hogweed. The stem is green, with few to no purple spots and has soft, fuzzy hairs.

Giant Hogweed (Heracleum Mantegazzianum)

Giant hogweed leaves are shiny and large, with leaf edges very coarse and serrated, like a jagged saw edge. Stems are hollow, ridged, and green with dark purple to purple-red spots.



Photo courtesy of the Invasive Species Council of Metro Vancouver



Photo courtesy of Creative Commons



Photo courtesy of WikiCommons

Health & Safety Alert

Giant hogweed sap contains toxins that cause dermatitis severe skin reaction when it touches skin exposed to sunlight. Damage to the skin may include: welts, rashes, blistering, and pigmented scarring that may last for up to six years.

Ecological Impacts of Giant Hogweed

Giant hogweed is highly competitive due to vigorous early-season growth, tolerance of full shade, and seasonal flooding. Infestations can cause erosion of stream banks, particularly when winter dieback exposes soil to rain. Because of its large size and rapid growth, it can quickly dominate invaded ravines and stream banks. This reduces the amount of habitat available for native plants and wildlife.

Landfilling

DO NOT BURN OR COMPOST.



Gooseneck Tie Off

- 1) Dispose of all plant parts in 3-4 mil poly (.003 to .004 inch thick).
Extra thick bags are required to avoid ripping by cut stems or thorns.
- 2) Label bags 'Giant Hogweed-Invasive Plants' and tie off using a gooseneck tie and a zap strap.
- 3) Take to one of the CVRD drop off depots:

Bings Creek Recycling Centre
Meade Creek Recycling Centre
Peerless Road Recycling Centre

References/Links

Coastal Invasive Species Committee
Invasive Species Council of BC
Toxic Plant Warning, WorkSafeBC



Photo courtesy of King County Noxious Weed Control Program, Seattle, WA

Warning

Contact with sap can happen by brushing against any broken plant parts, handling plant material, or even by touching tools or mowing equipment used for giant hogweed control.

Removal of Giant Hogweed

Prevent seed development and you will keep the plants contained to their original location.

- Cut off flowers to prevent seeds from growing.
- Excavate plants, severing roots 8-12 cm below the soil surface.
- Return to site to check for regrowth.
- Immature plants can be controlled by covering with black plastic or by mowing at 2 week intervals. Chemical controls can be effective, foliar applications are most effective in spring followed by a summer application on late appearing sprouts.



Photo courtesy of the Fraser Valley Regional District

Precaution

Suit up with waterproof gloves, a rubber raincoat and pants, and eye protection to ensure skin and eyes are protected from the sap of the plant.

No biological control agents are available.
For more information refer to: www.worksafebc.com

After careful identification, please report sightings of Giant Hogweed to the Coastal Invasive Species Committee at 1.844.298.2532 and provide specific location of suspect plant.