



# GIANT HOGWEED

(*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)

OR Class A  
Priority target species

WA Class A  
Priority target species



Photo: City of Portland BES

## Overview

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Giant hogweed is not only an invasive plant, but it is also a serious health hazard to humans and possibly other animals. Growing fast and tall, this is truly a giant plant and its watery sap can cause serious damage to skin. The sap is a phototoxin which makes skin ultra-sensitive to the sun. Contact may cause blisters and various types of rashes that can last for over a year and often leave scars; cases of rashes returning for several years are known. Contact with the eyes can lead to blindness. If activity near plants is essential, be sure to wear protective clothing that entirely covers any exposed skin.

Giant hogweed can produce as many as 100,000 seeds per plant. Seeds float, and can survive in the soil for more than 5 years, perhaps as many as 10. Some sites suggest seeds are being moved by animals.

## How to Identify

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Giant hogweed is most easily identified by its sheer size both in height and in leaf spread. Plants generally grow 8-15 feet tall on a hollow, ridged stalk that is light green with a deep red/purple coloring along ridges and speckled or 'smeared' between nodes. Full-grown stalks can be as thick as a forearm. Leaves are 2-5 feet wide and are deeply lobed. Flowers are relatively small, white and grow in large umbrella-like formations. Stalks are covered in small stubble-like hairs that emerge from small bumps. Giant hogweed has small seeds that travel easily by wind, water, and on animals.



Cow Parsnip. Photo: Dan Mullen

## Lookalikes

Giant hogweed closely resembles a native plant commonly known as cow parsnip (*Heracleum lanatum*). These are often, but not always, distinguishable from giant hogweed by their shorter maximum of 6-7 feet; their leaves are much smaller with shallower lobes and less jagged edges. Cow parsnip also has more pronounced ridges, like celery. Help with identification is available from the Oregon or Washington Departments of Agriculture, local Soil & Water Conservation Districts, or other members of the 4-County Cooperative Weed Management Area.

## Control Methods

Attempting to control giant hogweed without the aid of a licensed herbicide applicator is not recommended. Please contact the 4-County CWMA at [info@4countycwma.org](mailto:info@4countycwma.org) to get a control referral for this species.



Photo: City of Portland BES



Giant hogweed flowers. Photo: City of Portland BES

### SUBMIT YOUR REPORT TODAY!

Giant hogweed is a top priority species within the 4-County CWMA boundary. Please report at all sightings at [www.oregoninvasiveshotline.org](http://www.oregoninvasiveshotline.org) if in Oregon or [www.invasivespecies.wa.gov/sighting\\_form.shtml](http://www.invasivespecies.wa.gov/sighting_form.shtml) if in Washington.



The mission of the 4-County Cooperative Weed Management Area, comprising Clackamas, Clark, Multnomah, and Washington Counties, is to create and support collaborative weed management in the greater Portland area. For more details on our collaborative efforts in management, mapping, and outreach, please visit our website:

[www.4countycwma.org](http://www.4countycwma.org)