

August 2010

## Plant Parade Giant Hogweed

**Giant Hogweed** (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) is a member of the carrot or parsley family that was first introduced to the United States in the early 1900s. Popular among gardeners for its size and unique flower, it has escaped cultivated gardens and does particularly well in disturbed soils and along waterways.

Although attractive, Giant Hogweed is a public health hazard. If the sap of the plant is on a person's skin and the sap is exposed to sunlight, a severe burn can result. The sap causes photo-dermatitis or photo-sensitivity. Children are particularly vulnerable as they find the size and shape of the plant appealing.

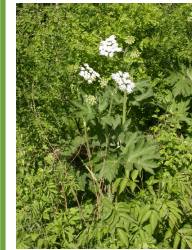


Giant Hogweed can be identified by its large size. It can be 8-14 feet tall with leaves up to 5 feet across. The stem may reach a size of 2-4 inches in diameter. It flowers in June or July and the seed head can persist into the winter. Where the leaves meet the stalk, the stem will be encircled with coarse hairs.

This plant is listed on the Federal Noxious Weeds list making it illegal to sell it or transport it across state lines. If you believe you have found Giant Hogweed, you should call the Giant Hogweed Hotline at 1-800-292-3939 to report your sighting.

## It's NOT Hogweed!

Several wildflowers are often mistaken for Giant Hogweed. But there are a few tips that can help you tell them apart.



**Cow Parsnip** is the plant most easily confused with Giant Hogweed. It is a native species and only grows to 5-8

feet with a stem diameter up to 2.5 inches. The hairs on the stem are fine and soft and the leaves are only 2.5 feet across.

**Angelica** is another similar plant. However, the flowers of this plant are in round bundles that all together are only about a foot in diameter. It rarely grows to 8 feet and has a smooth stem.



Although **Poison Hemlock** is toxic if ingested, it does not pose the same danger as Giant Hogweed. This exotic plant has fern-like leaves and a smooth stem with purple blotches.

Visit the Temporary Visitor Center for program information.

This inSTALLation is available online at [www.chippewanaturecenter.org](http://www.chippewanaturecenter.org) under the Naturalist Section.