

Giant Hogweed

HERACLEUM MANTEGAZZIANUM

August 2011

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

Giant Hogweed:

- Reaches a height of up to 5 m (16 ft)
- Has hollow, ridged stems 4 -10 cm (2-10 in) in diameter with dark, reddish-purple blotches
- Develops one or more large, white, umbrella-shaped flower clusters
- Features large, deeply incised, compound leaves 1-2 m (3-6 ft) in diameter with hairy undersides
- Produces elliptic, dry fruits with wings and swollen brown resin canals 1 cm in diameter

BIOLOGY

- Giant Hogweed is a perennial that flowers in the second or third year
- Flowers appear in late June or July, seeds start forming in July
- Giant Hogweed sometimes dies after flowering
- Its winged seeds spread by water, soil movement or by animal carrier
- Seeds can remain viable in the soil for over ten years

A DANGEROUS INVASIVE PLANT: ERADICATION REQUIRED

IMPACTS

Giant Hogweed poses a major public health hazard. The sap, when it touches human skin that is then exposed to light, can cause blistering and permanent scarring. Light sensitivity or even blindness may also occur.

Giant Hogweed crowds out native plants with its aggressive growth habit, and is not useful as food or to provide shelter to

native wildlife. It can contribute to soil erosion by replacing soil-protective native vegetation.



Look for large, white, umbrella-shaped flowers from late June to August

ban areas along roadsides and ditches, in unmanaged yards and on vacant lots. It prefers rich, damp soil and can grow in various light conditions. With prolific seed production and a tolerance of shade, it can quickly invade wetlands, river and stream banks.

Giant Hogweed has been found along Silverdale Creek, in Ruskin, Steelhead, as well as in urban areas of Mission.

DISTRIBUTION

Giant Hogweed is most commonly found in ur-

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO CONTROL GIANT HOGWEED?

The District of Mission is actively trying to eradicate Giant Hogweed from the municipality before it spreads to an extent where eradication is no longer possible. You can do your part by checking

for Giant Hogweed on your property, in your neighbourhood, in parks and on trails.

Eradication will only be successful, if plants are eliminated before their seeds can spread.



Mature Giant Hogweed has enormous, deeply incised leaves.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Giant Hogweed poses a serious health threat and can cause permanent scarring and blindness. If you choose to eradicate Giant Hogweed from your property yourself, wear proper protective clothing, shoes, eye and face protection (goggles/face shield) and avoid direct contact with any part of the plant at all times.

Exercise caution when removing clothing and protective gear that has been in contact with the plant.

There are also commercial contractors available to remove it professionally.

Contact the District at engineering@mission.ca or 604-820-3736 for a list of contractors.



Proper protective gear for Giant Hogweed removal

CONTROL METHODS

*“Long ago in the
Russian hills,
A Victorian
explorer found the
regal Hogweed by
a marsh,
He captured it and
brought it home.
Botanical creature
stirs, seeking
revenge.”*

*(Excerpt lyrics from
Genesis Return of
the Giant
Hogweed)*

District of Mission
Engineering Department
604-820-3795
engineering@mission.ca
www.mission.ca

Should you decide to tackle a Giant Hogweed infestation on your property yourself, there are several effective control measures.

MANUAL

Mature plants can be removed manually, if the root is cut off and removed at least 15 cm (6 in) below ground level. Younger plants are more resilient and may break off when being from compacted soil, leaving the root to continue to grow. When removing a mature plant, be sure to cover the flower and seed heads with a plastic bag before cutting the root to prevent the spread of seed. Dispose of plants by dropping them off for free at the

Mission Landfill in a sealed garbage bag. Please let the scalehouse staff know that you are bringing in Giant Hogweed and follow their instructions. Do not include it in the curbside garbage to avoid workers' exposure — do not compost!

MECHANICAL

Mowing immature plants is an option, but it is only effective for short periods of time and has to be repeated every two weeks. Continued mowing will eventually deplete the roots, but this may take years.

Anyone mowing immature Giant Hogweed plants with a lawn mower or weed eater must take every precaution to avoid being splattered by sap.

CHEMICAL

Herbicides, such as Glyphosate (e.g., Roundup) and Triclopyr (e.g., Brush-B-Gone) are effective against Giant Hogweed and may seem like the easiest solution. However, it is important to remember that herbicides pose safety and environmental risks, especially if applied near streams and wetlands. It is recommended that such products only be applied by licensed professionals in accordance with the label instructions.



Giant Hogweed seedling in mid-march