

Giant Hogweed Control

Giant hogweed eradication is required in Washington. Use these recommended control methods to eradicate it from your landscape.

Always wear protective clothing and avoid skin contact when controlling giant hogweed. Keep children away from giant hogweed.

Mechanical: Plants may be dug-out, but care should be taken to remove much of the root stalk. Dig up young plants, removing the roots. Dispose of plant material, including flowerheads in trash bags. Mowing serves only to stimulate budding on the root stalk, but it may be successful if done consistently and persistently enough to starve the roots.

Chemical: Glyphosate is considered the most effective herbicide and should be used carefully around desirable species since it is nonselective. Apply herbicide during the bud stage and while the plant is actively growing. If plants are in bloom, make sure to cut flowerheads and dispose of them in trash bags. Always read and follow the label instructions before applying any herbicides for proper rate and timing. Check with your local county noxious weed board for specific herbicide recommendations.

When using any type of giant hogweed control, monitor areas for seedlings and re-sprouts. Plant controlled areas with appropriate species to help prevent further weed establishment.



Contact Us

If you have questions about giant hogweed control, identification or about other noxious weeds, we can help. Please contact us at:

WA State Noxious Weed Control Board
P.O. Box 42560; Olympia, WA 98504
360-725-5764
<http://www.nwcb.wa.gov>

Or contact your local county noxious weed control board:

Noxious Weeds in Washington

“Noxious weed” means a plant that when established is highly destructive, competitive, or difficult to control by cultural or chemical practices. RCW 17.10.10

Noxious weeds reduce crop yields, destroy native plant and animal habitat, damage recreational opportunities, clog waterways, lower land values, and poison or harm people and livestock.

Giant hogweed is a Class A noxious weed in Washington State. Eradication of giant hogweed is required in Washington. Check with your local county noxious weed control board or go to our website to find out more information about identifying and controlling giant hogweed.



Giant Hogweed

Heracleum mantegazzianum



A toxic, noxious weed
in Washington

A Toxic, Noxious Weed

Originally introduced as a garden ornamental, giant hogweed escapes and forms dense canopies, outcompeting native species and increasing soil erosion along streambanks.

It is a public hazard. It exudes a clear watery sap which sensitizes the skin to ultraviolet radiation. This can result in severe burns to the affected area when exposed to the sun, causing blistering and painful dermatitis.



Scars and blisters caused by giant hogweed

USDA APHIS PPQ Archive, USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org

Growth and Spread

Giant hogweed is a perennial plant that takes several years to go from seed to flower production. Plants generally die after they flower but may produce additional crowns which continue to grow, flower and set seed. Reproduction is by seed and by buds formed on the crowns. Flowerheads produce an abundance of seed that remain viable for at least 7 years.



Jan Samanek, State Phytosanitary Administration, Bugwood.org



Identification

Giant hogweed is a member of the carrot family and is distinguished by its large size. Plants can grow 15 to 20 feet tall!

- Stems are hollow, 2-4 inches in diameter and have distinctive purplish-red, bumpy blotches with stiff hairs.
- Leaves are compound and deeply divided with jagged edges. They can grow to 5 feet diameter.
- The white, umbrella-like, flat-topped flowerheads can reach 2.5 feet wide.
- Seeds are dry, flattened and oval with brown resin canals.



Where does it grow?

Giant hogweed grows in a wide variety of habitats but is most common along roadsides, vacant lots, streams, rivers and open woodlands.

Native to temperate parts of Asia, giant hogweed is found primarily in western Washington, though has been found in a few eastern Washington counties.



Giant hogweed growing in a woodland garden

Look A-Like

Please note that our native cow parsnip is closely related and has similar leaves and flowers. However, cow parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*, syn. *H. lanatum*) is usually smaller, reaching 2-4 or sometimes 6 feet tall when blooming. Its leaves are not as deeply divided and the stem is green, ridged, and fuzzy with a slight purplish sheen.

Cow parsnip can also cause a rash so skin contact should be avoided. Please ask your local county noxious weed board for plant identification assistance.

Thurston County NWCB