



## IN BRIEF: MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

### IN EARLY MAY Initiate Management Plan



Small plants are easier to dig up in the spring and it is also a more comfortable time of year to wear the appropriate protective clothing.

### EARLY JUNE Reconnaissance



Whatever method of removal you choose, there is always a chance of regrowth or new seedling germination. Evaluate the site 2-3 weeks after treatment and address any plant escapes.

### BY CANADA DAY Final Removal



Any stray plants or any additional regrowth that still exist should be removed.



Source: The Illustrated Flora of BC

## PREVENTION

- Prevent giant hogweed from establishing in the first place by monitoring unmaintained open space areas and vacant lots, especially near water.

- In areas where the plant has been eradicated or removed, cover with a competitive mulch or some type of physical barrier in order to prevent the emergence of either new seedling Giant hogweed plants or other undesirable vegetation.

Plant native vegetation suited to the site to prevent a reinfestation.

- Carefully examine plants sold as cow parsnip. Giant hogweed is sometimes misidentified and sold by nurseries and at local plant sales.



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# Giant Hogweed in Muskoka

**DID YOU KNOW:** Giant hogweed only flowers and produces seed once in its lifetime.

Limit the spread of Giant hogweed: **STOP SEED PRODUCTION**

## IDENTIFICATION

- **HEIGHT:** 1 to 5.5 metres.
- **LEAVES:** Large, deeply cut with sharp coarse teeth, reaching widths in excess of 1 metre.
- **STEMS:** Covered in coarse, whisker-like hairs with red/purple spots.
- **FLOWERS:** White, umbrella shaped, up to 1.2 metres across.
- **SIMILAR SPECIES:** Cow parsnip and Angelica. Giant hogweed is distinguished by its larger size and purple spots on the stem.



Source: Page et al 2006

Giant hogweed, *Heracleum mantegazzianum*, is a perennial member of the Carrot Family native to Asia. Like many invasive plant species, Giant hogweed was brought into Canada as a garden curiosity, but because of its tenacious and invasive nature, it quickly becomes a pest within ornamental gardens and readily escapes. Giant hogweed has the potential to spread readily and grows along roadsides, ditches and streams.

# CAUTION: Poisonous Giant Hogweed

## SEVERE PUBLIC HEALTH HAZARD

In addition to ecological impacts such as crowding out desirable native vegetation with its aggressive growth, Giant hogweed poses a serious public health hazard.

The plant exudes a clear watery sap that, upon contact with human and animal skin, sensitizes the skin to the ultraviolet light in sunlight, causing photodermatitis.

This photodermatitis can cause severe burns to the affected areas, resulting in severe blistering and painful dermatitis. These blisters can develop into purplish or blackened scars.

Contact with the eyes can cause temporary and sometimes permanent blindness.

## IN MUSKOKA

Stands of Giant hogweed have been identified in several areas throughout Muskoka, most notably in disturbed roadside areas within the Townships of Muskoka Lakes and Georgian Bay.

Due to the danger to public health that this plant poses, some municipalities have developed programs to remove Giant hogweed on public property.

## MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

The preferred method of control is Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Wherever possible, plants should be removed manually. However, given the danger to public health, for large infestations a least toxic herbicide may be considered to minimize physical exposure of the homeowner to the plant.

## PROTECT YOURSELF:

**Equip yourself with goggles, rubber gloves, rubber boots and Tyvek coveralls before coming into contact with the plant.** Once the plant has been removed, thoroughly wash your rubber boots and gloves using soap, water and a scrub brush before removing your protective clothing.

## EARLY MAY: BEGIN MANAGEMENT PLAN

The most appropriate time to remove plants is in late April or early May as plants are typically less than 30 cm in height and are easier to dig up.

Using a shovel, dig up as much of the taproot as possible and leave the dug up plant material on the ground to degrade (unless there is the risk of children or pets coming into contact with it). Cover the treated area with a landscape fabric, then cover the landscape fabric with a bark mulch to inhibit the germination of non-desirable weedy plants.

## EARLY JUNE: RECONNAISSANCE

Evaluate the managed site and remove any regrowth.

## BY CANADA DAY: FINAL FOLLOW UP

Visit the treated area one last time before July 1st to remove any regrowth and stray plants.

**IF YOU COME IN CONTACT WITH GIANT HOGWEED:** wash with soap and water immediately, avoid direct exposure to sunlight and seek medical advice.