

Giant Hogweed

Giant hogweed was introduced as an ornamental, and has escaped along roadsides, stream banks and waste areas in scattered localities in southern Ontario.

Keep an eye out for it and steer clear!

How to identify Giant Hogweed

Flowers: numerous small white flowers in June to August, clustered into a flat topped umbel 2.5ft to 4ft across.

Stems are hollow, ridged, 2-4 in. in diameter, 8-14 ft. tall, with purple blotches and coarse white hairs. The hairs are especially prominent that circle the stem at the base of the leaf stalks.

Leaves are lobed, deeply incised and up to 5 ft. across.

Fruit (containing the seed) is dry, flattened, oval, about 3/8 in. long and tan with brown lines.

Health Risks

The clear sap found in the hairs, leaves and stem of the Giant Hogweed plant contains furanocoumarins, a chemical that makes human skin extremely sensitive to sunlight and **within 48 hours**, leads to **inflammation, red colouring and itching, weeping blisters and eventually black and purplish scars**. Contact with the eyes can cause temporary or even permanent **blindness** in some cases.

If you are exposed to Giant Hogweed:

- Wash the affected area thoroughly with soap and cold water as soon as possible
- Avoid exposure to sunlight
- Seek medical attention

Most susceptible to infection are gardeners, campers and children, who have been known to use the plant's large, hollow stems as play telescopes or pea-shooters.

See reverse for photos

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