

## Prevention and Control

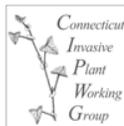
If you suspect Giant Hogweed is on your property, please call the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG) and describe the plant so we can verify its identity. Arrangements will be made to visit your property to confirm the presence of the weed and discuss management options with you.

Mowing, cutting and weed whacking are not recommended as a means of control because the plant's large perennial root system soon sends up new growth. Also, these tactics are risky because they increase the opportunities for homeowners to come in contact with the plant's sap.

Giant Hogweed seeds can be wind-blown several feet from the parent plant or may be carried by water to invade new areas. However, people are usually responsible for spreading Giant Hogweed over long distances. Seeds or young plants from a friend's garden, planted in new locations, help spread this weed quickly over distances much greater than the plant would spread naturally. The dried fruit clusters used in decorative arrangements and discarded outdoors can start a new patch of Giant Hogweed. Be careful not to spread the plant by seed or division.

Both CIPWG and U.S. Department of Agriculture strongly encourage homeowners/landowners to call the number below as the first step towards managing a suspected Giant Hogweed infestation.

### To Report Sightings Contact: The Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group



Victoria Wallace,  
[victoria.wallace@uconn.edu](mailto:victoria.wallace@uconn.edu)  
[info@cipwg.org](mailto:info@cipwg.org); [cipwg.uconn.edu](http://cipwg.uconn.edu)



EXTENSION

University of Connecticut College of  
Agriculture, Health & Natural Resources

Department of Plant Science  
1390 Storrs Road, Unit 4163  
Storrs, CT 06269-4163



U.S. Dept. of Agriculture  
Animal & Plant Health  
Inspection Service  
Plant Protection & Quarantine  
900 Northrop Road, Suite C  
Wallingford, CT 06492  
(203) 269-4277

# Giant Hogweed

*Heracleum mantegazzianum*

An attractive but  
dangerous noxious weed-  
Have you seen this plant?



## About *Heracleum mantegazzianum*

Giant Hogweed is a member of the carrot or parsley family (Apiaceae) introduced into Europe and North America in the early 1900's. The plant's name comes from Hercules, of ancient mythological fame, and Giant Hogweed is aptly described as robust in appearance.

It is native to the Caucasus region of Eurasia. Its massive size and imposing appearance made it desirable for arboretums and gardens. Giant Hogweed escaped from cultivation and became established in rich, moist soils along roadside ditches, stream banks, waste ground, along tree lines and open wooded areas. In the U.S., it is known to occur in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, District of Columbia, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Oregon, and Washington.

### Hogweed is Hazardous

This tall, majestic plant is a public health hazard because of its potential to cause severe skin irritation in susceptible people. Plant sap produces painful, burning blisters within 24 to 48 hours after contact. Plant juices also can produce painless red blotches that later develop into purplish or brownish scars that may persist for several years. For an adverse reaction to occur, the skin, contaminated with plant juices, must be moist (perspiration) and then exposed to sunlight. Several other plants also in the Giant Hogweed family are also capable of causing this reaction, known as Phytophotodermatitis (phyto = plant, photo = light and dermatitis = skin rash).



Giant Hogweed is a Federal Noxious Weed, making it unlawful to propagate, sell or transport. Since 2001, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the University of Connecticut and the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group have been surveying for this weed through the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey Program.

We need your help in locating new sites of Giant Hogweed. If you see this weed, please report its occurrence by calling the Giant Hogweed Hotline.

Giant Hogweed Info:  
[info@cipwg.org](mailto:info@cipwg.org)



Giant Hogweed in late summer: Seeds are forming.



A Herculean stem!

**Giant Hogweed** is a biennial or perennial herb growing from a forked or branched taproot. Plants sprout in early spring from the roots or the seeds.

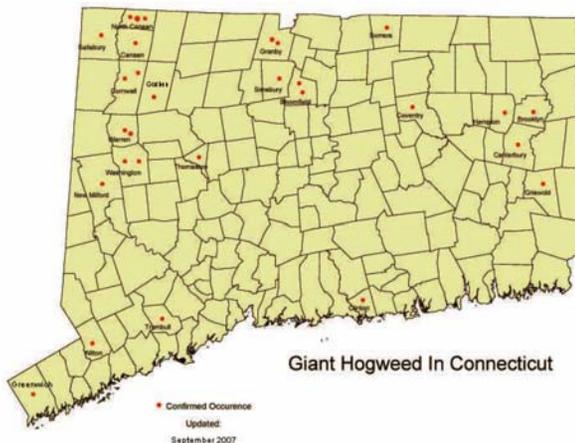
### How to Recognize Giant Hogweed

The best time to identify Giant Hogweed is when it's blooming.

- **Flowers:** numerous small white flowers in late June or July, clustered into a flat-topped umbel up to 2 ½ feet across.
- **Stems** are hollow, ridged, 2-4 inches in diameter, 8-14 feet tall, with purple blotches and coarse white hairs. The hairs that circle the stem are especially prominent at the base of the leaf stalks.
- **Leaves** are lobed, deeply incised and up to 5 feet across.
- **Fruit** (containing the seed) is dry, flattened, oval, and about 3/8 inches long and tan with brown, club-shaped lines.

### Giant Hogweed in Connecticut

*Heracleum mantegazzianum*



### Growth Stages



After producing seeds in late summer, the plants die, leaving stems standing into winter. At this point seeds have been dispersed to germinate the following spring or in future years.  
(Photo credit: Cornell Cooperative Extension, Misc. Bull. 123)



Seeds germinate from early spring throughout the growing season.



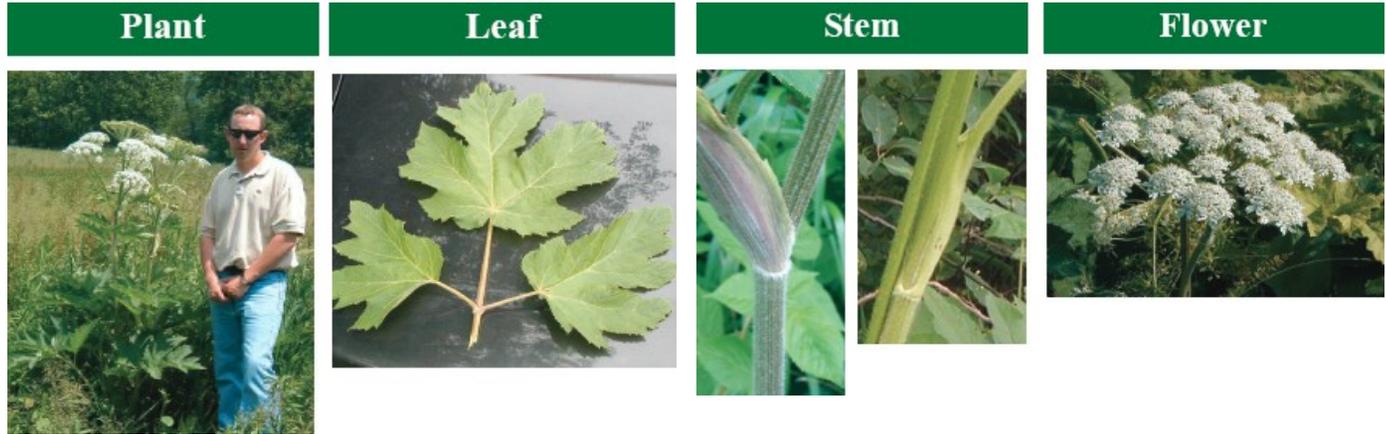
Leaf clusters sprout from overwintering roots each year for 2-4 years until the plant flowers.



Plants bolt and flower in early to mid-summer after rosette plants accumulate enough energy reserves.

## Similar Plants Commonly Mistaken for Giant Hogweed

**Cow Parsnip** (*Heracleum lanatum*), a native plant, is mostly likely to be confused with Giant Hogweed. Cow Parsnip is smaller, reaching a height of 5-8'. Unlike Giant Hogweed, the stem may be entirely green or have a slight purplish cast, is deeply ridged and only up to 1-2" in diameter. Hairs on Cow Parsnip are fine, soft and fuzzy, rather than coarse like those on Giant Hogweed. Although present on both leaf surfaces, the soft hairs occur primarily on the lower surface and give the leaves a velvety appearance. Mature leaves measure up to 2 to 2 1/2' in width. In CT, Cow Parsnip generally flowers in early June, typically a few weeks before Giant Hogweed, and produces smaller, flat-topped flower clusters.



**Angelica** (*Angelica atropurpurea*) is easily distinguished from Giant Hogweed by its uniformly waxy green to purple, smooth, hollow stems and compound, globular, softball-sized clusters of white or greenish-white flowers less than 1' in diameter. Angelica is shorter than Giant Hogweed, seldom attaining a height of 8'. The mature compound leaves can reach widths of 2' and have dozens of small leaflets. This plant typically flowers from the end of May through mid-June in CT.



**Poison Hemlock** (*Conium maculatum*) is a multi-branched, non-native biennial ranging from 4 to 9' in height. The waxy stem has purple blotches and the entire plant is smooth. Leaves are bright green, fern-like and may appear glossy. Small white flowers are arranged in numerous, small, flat-topped clusters on all of the branches. Poison Hemlock has a disagreeable "mousy" odor, and the entire plant is poisonous if ingested. It generally flowers from May through June in CT.

