

## **Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)**

Giant Hogweed is a garden escapee which is rarely found on roadsides or other disturbed areas in the District of Kent. It has large (up to 1 m across) jagged leaves, splotchy purple stems, and large (0.5 - 1 m) white flower clusters, with over 50 flower stems per cluster. Mature plants are very large, and can be 2-5 m tall.



*(Credit: Flickr Creative Commons © Gertrud K.)*



*Characteristic purple splotching on stem*

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The sap of Giant Hogweed is **phototoxic**, meaning it can cause skin irritation when exposed to light. This can result in burns and blisters, or blindness if in contact with the eyes. This reaction usually lasts for several hours to several days, but in rare cases, has been known to cause phototoxic reactions for several years. For this reason, control and treatment is best left to professionals, who often wear gloves, eye protection, or even full protective suits while cutting plants or applying herbicide.

Cow-parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*), is a native, benign plant that is often mistaken for Giant Hogweed. It has a similar appearance, but is smaller (only 1 - 1.5 m tall), has much less jagged leaves (leaves look more like a maple leaf), green stems without purple blotches, and only 15-30 flower stems per flower cluster.



*Cow-parsnip stem, lacking purple splotches. Credit: District of Kent.*



*Purple splotches on Giant Hogweed stem. Credit: District of Kent.*

To report Giant Hogweed on your own property or on District property, and learn more information about your treatment options, please contact Dave Charbula, Environmental and Engineering Technologist at [dcharbula@kentbc.ca](mailto:dcharbula@kentbc.ca) or 604-796-2235.

For more information, see the following links:

<https://bcinvasives.ca/invasive-species/identify/invasive-plants/giant-hogweed>

[https://bcinvasives.ca/documents/Giant\\_Hogweed\\_TIPS\\_2017\\_WEB.pdf](https://bcinvasives.ca/documents/Giant_Hogweed_TIPS_2017_WEB.pdf)

<https://fviss.ca/invasive-plant/giant-hogweed>

<https://fviss.ca/assets/wysiwyg/files/WorkSafe%20BC-Giant%20Hogweed.pdf>

<http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/InvasiveSpeciesBMP-GiantHogweed-v4.pdf>