



Giant Hogweed

Latin name: *Heracleum mantegazzianum*

Plant Description

This plant is not native to the United States. It originates in South West Asia from where it was imported as an ornamental garden plant to Europe in the 19th century. Its first recording in the United States was in 1917 in an ornamental garden in New York.

It is a bi-annual plant but is known to grow for more years depending on the soils it grows in. The plant will die after it flowers. In the first year the plant will stay low at about 1 to 2 ft, and in the second year, or sometimes in the third year, it will develop fully and will reach 15 to 18 ft in height. The plants will then flower in June to August. The flowers are umbrella-shaped resembling flowers of Carrot or Parsley, but much larger at 1 to 2 ½ feet wide. The leaves have an alternate arrangement, are deeply lobed and can be up to 5 feet in diameter. The stems are hollow and can be 2 to 4 inches in diameter and have distinct purple – red blotches and have prominent white hair. The stems have a thick circle of hair at the base of the leaf stalk. The plant remains in the rosette stage until it develops sufficient root reserves to initiate flower formation.

Where it may be found

The plant grows in rich moist soils along roadsides, stream banks, vacant farmland and in areas that are not disturbed such as fence and tree lines.

Giant Hogweed is not reported to grow in Virginia, however it is officially reported to grow in Washington State, Oregon, some states in the Midwest, in New England, Pennsylvania, Maryland, DC and North Carolina.



Photo Credit: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation



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Contact with poisonous plants can be dangerous. For appropriate medical advice call the National Poison Control Center at **1-800-222-1222**



Which part(s) of the plant are toxic

This plant, although VERY DANGEROUS to humans, it is NOT poisonous the way we commonly think. The sap of this plant contains furocoumarin that in humans is strongly phototoxic.

Therefore this plant should not be touched at all!

This plant is on the Federal Noxious weed list of the USDA / APHIS

Common Symptoms

The juice of this plant can be strongly phototoxic resulting in serious skin reactions after exposure to sunlight.

First a skin rash may occur that may change to blisters that can look like burn wounds. A red - purple scarring may develop that may last years.

Exposure of the eyes to the plant's juice may lead to blindness.

Notes

There are various look alike plants in Virginia such as Cow parsnip, Poison Hemlock, Angelica and Wild parsnip particularly in its first year of growth of Giant Hogweed. These may look like Giant Hogweed, none however, reach the size of leaves, stems and flowers of Giant Hogweed nor do they have the red-purple blotches and white hair on the stem.

Additional information may be obtained from the following sources:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/39809.html>

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/72466.html

www.kingcounty.gov/environment/animal_sandplants/noxious-weeds/weed-identification/giant-hogweed.aspx

<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/hogweed.shtml>



Day 3



Photo Credit: Zamarra Kok,
The Netherlands

Day 5



Photo Credit: New York State Department
of Environmental Conservation