

## Prevention and Control

If you suspect Giant Hogweed is on your property, please call the MDA Hotline and describe the plant so our staff can verify its identity. If the plant is Giant Hogweed, we will make arrangements to visit your property, assess the site and discuss our management strategies with you. The MDA/USDA staff has knowledge of which herbicide combinations are effective in controlling this noxious weed. Once a control program is initiated, our staff will visit your property periodically to determine the success of the efforts and to check for any new seedlings that may have sprouted. Since Hogweed seeds may remain dormant in the soil for at least 5 years, eradication requires a long term commitment, something our staff is prepared to make.

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 is spread naturally by seeds, which can be wind-blown and scattered 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 are sometimes used in decorative arrangements, and when discarded outdoors, can start a new patch of Giant Hogweed.

Both the MDA and USDA strongly encourage homeowners/landowners to call either agency as the first step towards managing a suspected Hogweed infestation.



Department of  
**AGRICULTURE**

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Pesticide, Plant Pest Management Div.  
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(517) 373-1087



U. S. Dept. of Agriculture  
Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service  
Plant Protection & Quarantine  
11200 Metro Airport Center Dr., Suite 140  
Romulus, MI 48174  
(734) 942-9005

# Giant Hogweed

*Heracleum mantegazzianum*

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





## About Giant Hogweed

Giant Hogweed is a member of the carrot or parsley family (Apiaceae) that was introduced into Europe and North America in the early 1900s. It is native to the Caucasus region of Eurasia. Its massive size and imposing appearance made it desirable for arboretums and gardens. Giant Hogweed soon 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 Pennsylvania, Maryland, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin. The plant's name comes from Hercules, of ancient mythological fame, and Giant Hogweed is aptly described as robust in appearance.

## 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. Some other plants are capable of causing this reaction, known as phytophotodermatitis (Phyto=plant, Photo=light), including several that are also in the Giant Hogweed family.



Giant Hogweed is a Federal Noxious Weed, making it unlawful to propagate, sell or transport this plant in Michigan. The USDA has been surveying for this weed since 1998.

We need your help in locating sites of Giant Hogweed in Michigan. If you see this weed, please report its occurrence by calling either the MDA or the USDA.

**TOLL FREE  
Giant Hogweed Hotline:  
1 (800) 292-3939**

Please leave a daytime phone number and you will be contacted within a few days.



Giant Hogweed in late summer: Seeds are forming.



A Herculean stem!



# Giant Hogweed Plant

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

## How to Recognize Giant Hogweed

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

- **Flowers:** numerous small white flowers in June or July, clustered into a flat-topped umbel up to 2½ ft. 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.

## Known Distribution in Michigan

as of January 1, 2005

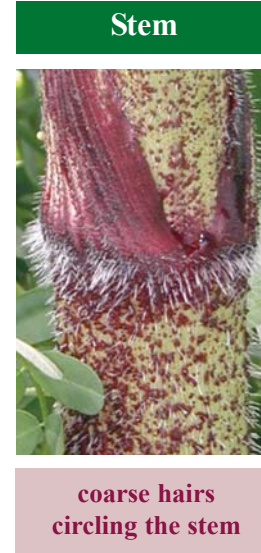
Branch County  
 Calhoun County  
 Gogebic County  
 Ingham County  
 Jackson County  
 Kalamazoo County  
 Kent County  
 Manistee County  
 Oakland County  
 Ottawa County  
 Saginaw County



Beginning to flower



huge leaves



coarse hairs circling the stem



large clusters of small flowers

## Growth Stages



### Dead Stems

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)



### Seedling

Seeds germinate from early spring throughout the growing season.



### Flowering Stems

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



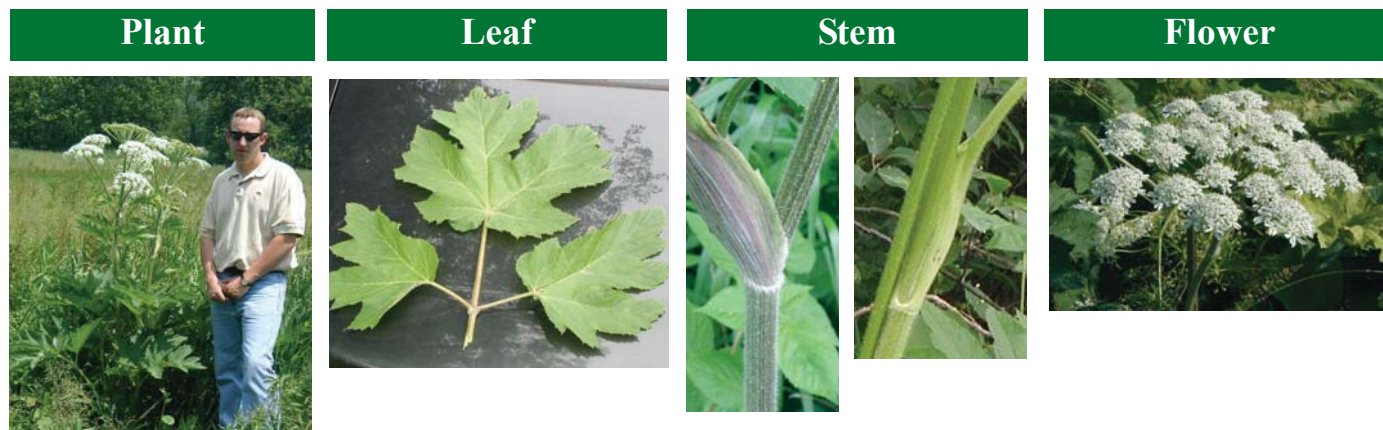
### Rosette of leaves

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



## Similar Plants Commonly Mistaken for Giant Hogweed

**Cow Parsnip** (*Heracleum lanatum*), a native plant, is most likely to be confused with Giant Hogweed. Cow Parsnip is smaller, reaching a height of 5-8' in Michigan. 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 ½' in diameter. Cow Parsnip generally flowers from early June through early July in Michigan, typically several weeks before Giant Hogweed, and produces much 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 mid May through mid June in Michigan.



**Poison Hemlock** (*Conium maculatum*) is a multi-branched, non-native biennial ranging from 4 to 9' tall. 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 the branches. Poison Hemlock has a disagreeable "mousy" odor, and the entire plant is poisonous if ingested. It generally flowers in late May through late June in Michigan.

