

Ohio's Newest Noxious Weed GIANT HOGWEED



The leaves of Giant Hogweed can look very different based on the plant's stage of development.

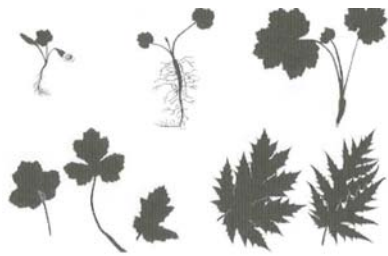


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The State of Ohio recently added Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) to the state noxious weed list making it unlawful to propagate, sell, or transport. It is a noxious weed due to its ability to spread and its potential human health hazard. Giant hogweed is native to the Caucasus region of Eurasia and was introduced into Europe in the 1800's. Giant hogweed's first recording in the United States was in 1917 in an ornamental garden in New York. To date, it has been recorded in eleven states including Ohio. Ohio's population of Giant Hogweed is primarily found in Northeast Ohio especially in the counties that border Pennsylvania.

One giant hogweed plant can produce 20,000 seeds thus allowing it to spread easily when not managed. This plant, once found exclusively in ornamental gardens, has escaped and has become established in rich, moist soils along roadside ditches, stream banks, vacant farmland, and along tree lines. Giant Hogweed plants form a dense canopy and will out compete and displace many native species.

Giant Hogweed's greatest danger is the affect its sap has on humans. Furocoumarins in the sap can cause a skin reaction known as phyto-photodermatitis. This causes the skin to be highly sensitive to ultraviolet light. Swelling and blistering of the skin occurs which can include permanent scarring. Contact with the eyes can cause temporary and sometimes permanent blindness.

Control of Giant Hogweed usually includes such practices as digging, mowing, cutting, removal of umbels, grazing, and herbicide application. Because Giant Hogweed is a prolific seed producer, continuous management to prevent regeneration is important. It is recommended that landowners who find Giant Hogweed on their property contact their local county OSU Extension office or a regional USDA-APHIS office for current spray recommendations.

Giant Hogweed is commonly confused with other tall herbaceous plants that grow in Ohio. These include *Angelica atropurpurea* (Angelica), *Conium maculatum* (Poison hemlock), *Daucus carota* (Wild carrot), and *Heracleum lanatum* (Cow parsnip).



Giant Hogweed can be identified by prominent white hairs and purple blotches on the stem. The hollow stems contain the dangerous sap.



One Giant Hogweed plant can produce 20,000 seeds



Giant Hogweed flowers in late June to early July producing a beautiful umbel of white flowers.



Giant Hogweed can cause severe and permanent damage to unsuspecting landowners. (photo courtesy of USDA-APHIS)

More information on Giant Hogweed in Ohio can be found at <http://ashtabula.osu.edu/>