

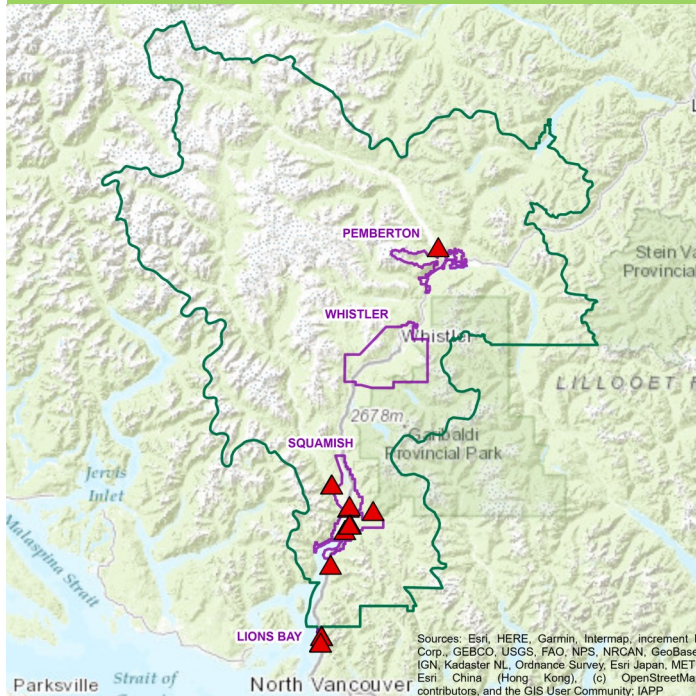
Giant Hogweed

Heracleum mantegazzianum

FACT SHEET

Squamish: Eradicate | Whistler: Prevent | Pemberton: Prevent

DISTRIBUTION



Origin: Giant Hogweed is native to the Caucasus Mountains in southwestern Asia. It was introduced to North America as a garden curiosity due to its size. It may have appeared in a garden near French Creek on Vancouver Island in the early 1960's and has spread since then.

Habitat: Giant Hogweed prefers disturbed areas, and thrives in wet soil. It is found along streams and rivers, parks, forest edges, on waste ground, near houses, gardens, in vacant lots, and along transportation corridors. Giant Hogweed is well established in the Metro Vancouver region.

Propagation: Giant Hogweed reproduces solely by seed and can produce up to 100,000 seeds per plant. Giant Hogweed plants generally die after setting seed, however, seeds can remain viable for up to 15 years.

IDENTIFICATION



General: Giant Hogweed is a very tall biennial or short-lived perennial weed that is classed as noxious under the *BC Weed Control Act*.

Flowers: Numerous, small white flowers are arranged in large (20 - 50 cm in diameter), flat-topped, umbrella-like clusters. Plants flower only after a year or more of growth.

Stems: Tall (2 - 5 m) with reddish-purple blotches along the stem. Stems are hollow and coated in coarse bristles arising from blister-like pustules.

Leaves: Similar in shape to a maple leaf, however much larger in size and deeply incised. Leaves can grow up to 3 m long and individual blades can be up to 2.6 cm wide.

Roots: Variable - stout, fleshy tuberous root stalks that form perennating buds each year.

Similar Species: The native plant Cow Parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*) is often mistaken for Giant Hogweed. Cow Parsnip is generally smaller (1 - 2 m tall) compared to Giant Hogweed (5 - 6 m).

Giant Hogweed's size is also a good way to distinguish it from other members of the Carrot family (Apiaceae).

WARNING: Cow Parsnip also contains a toxic sap that causes severe burns when exposed to sunlight.

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Vectors of Spread: While about 95% of Giant Hogweed seeds fall within 9 m of the parent plant, they can also be dispersed short distances by wind. Longer-range dispersal is usually due to water (the seeds can float for up to 8 hours); humans also spread Giant Hogweed by moving contaminated soil.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Giant Hogweed is found in small amounts in the Sea to Sky Region, so PREVENTION of further spread is key:

- Regularly monitor properties for weed infestations.
- Ensure soil and gravel are uncontaminated before transport.
- Do not purchase, trade, or grow Giant Hogweed.
- Remove plant material from any equipment used in infested areas and wash it before leaving the site.
- Ensure plants (particularly flowering heads or root fragments) are bagged or covered to prevent spread during transport to designated disposal sites (e.g. landfill). **Do NOT compost.**
- Take caution when controlling Giant Hogweed near streams or ditch lines, to prevent the movement of plant parts or seeds downstream.

Giant Hogweed can be controlled by:

WARNING: Clear, toxic sap is found in all parts of Giant Hogweed. Contact with sap can occur by brushing against the plant, handling plant material, or even by touching tools or mowing equipment that were used for Giant Hogweed control. **To ensure the necessary precautions are taken, it is best to hire a professional to handle Giant Hogweed infestations.**

- **Mechanical Control:** SSISC Field Crew wear full personal protective equipment when treating Giant Hogweed to protect themselves from the toxic sap. All above-ground plant material is cut and placed in a sealed bag for disposal. The taproot is severed as low as possible using a sharp, long-handled narrow shovel or spade. If possible, taproots are cut in early spring (April to May) so that sites can be revisited in early summer (June to July) to target any re-growth or missed plants. If it's not possible to remove the whole plant, removing the flower heads while the umbels are in flower will provide a short-term, stop-gap solution for preventing seed dispersal, but it does not kill the plant.
- **Chemical Control:** Foliar application of glyphosate, chlorsulfuron + aminocyclopyrachlor, metsulfuron methyl + aminocyclopyrachlor or aminopyralid are most effective in the spring on actively growing plants, followed with a subsequent summer application for late sprouts. Stem injections of glyphosate or "cut stem and inject" methods are effective after heavy sap flow in the spring. We recommend that any herbicide application is carried out by a person holding a valid BC Pesticide Applicator Certificate. Before selecting and applying herbicides, you must review and follow herbicide labels and application rates; municipal, regional, provincial and federal laws and regulations; species-specific treatment recommendations, and site-specific goals and objectives.
- **Biological Control:** There are no biocontrol agents available.

If you suspect you have found Giant Hogweed anywhere in the Sea to Sky region:

Contact the Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council to report and for the most recent, up to date control methods. All reports will be kept confidential.

References: Eflora BC, Fraser Valley Invasive Species Society, Invasive Species Centre, ISCBC, Metro Vancouver, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ontario's Invading Species Awareness Program, Royal BC Museum, USDA, Worksafe BC.

IMPACTS

Health:

- Hairs on stems and leaves exude a clear, watery sap which contains furanocoumarins and sensitizes skin to U.V. radiation.
- Contact with sunlight after being exposed to sap can result in severe burns, blistering and painful dermatitis (forming 24 to 48 hours after contact).
- Exposure of sap to eyes may cause temporary or permanent blindness.

Ecological:

- Giant Hogweed is a highly competitive plant due to its vigorous early-season growth; ability to coexist with other aggressive growers; and tolerance of shade and seasonal flooding.
- Infestations can result in increased erosion hazards in riparian areas due to characteristically shallow roots.

To ensure the necessary precautions are taken, it is best to hire a professional to handle Giant Hogweed infestations.



REPORT SIGHTINGS

Visit ssisc.ca/report

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