

INFORMATION ON GIANT HOGWEED

DESCRIPTIONS

Giant hogweed is an invasive and toxic exotic plant. It poses a risk to health and the environment.

In humans, contact with giant hogweed sap, combined with exposure to light (natural or artificial ultraviolet rays), causes skin lesions similar to burns. Furthermore, when this plant grows somewhere, it spreads quickly and harms the growth of other plants in the area.

Giant hogweed grows in cool, moist environments such as:

- Along river banks;
- Along ditches;
- Along railway lines;
- Along roadsides;
- In meadows;
- In vacant lots.



DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN GIANT HOGWEED AND COW PARSNIP

La berce laineuse, aussi appelée grande berce, ressemble beaucoup à la berce du Caucase. Cependant, la berce laineuse n'est pas envahissante. Elle ne pose pas de risque pour l'environnement.

Description	Giant hogweed (Invasive)	Cow parsnip (Indigenous to Quebec)
Height	The plant can measure between 2 and 5 meters high.	Cow parsnip does not grow any taller than 3 meters high.
Flower colour	White	White
Stems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main stem is strong and hollow • It is 4 to 10 cm in diameter • It is covered with rough white hairs scattered all over the stem but mostly at the base of the leaf stalk. • It has extensive and prominent reddish-purple blotches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stem is entirely covered with felt-like, soft white hairs. • Some parts of the stem may have a red tinge. Spots on the stem are not as colourful as those of giant hogweed.
Leaves	The leaves are divided into 1 to 3 deeply cut, pointed leaflets.	The back of the leaves has a felt-like texture and are abundantly covered with white soft and woolly hairs.

Giant hogweed



Cow parsnip



GETTING RID OF GIANT HOGWEED

Given the harmful effects of giant hogweed on the environment and health, it is very important to prevent it from spreading.

As such, avoid sowing, planting, multiplying or transporting giant hogweed. Before proceeding with getting rid of giant hogweed, you must do the following:

- Correctly identify the plant so that you do not confuse it with cow parsnip
- Find the clonal colonies (group of plants), at the beginning of spring ideally
- Protect yourself in order to avoid burns caused by contact with sap from the plant

INFORMATION ON GIANT HOGWEED

If you must handle giant hogweed, protect yourself properly:

- Cover all parts of your body with non-absorbent garments (synthetic and waterproof materials): pants, long-sleeved shirt, rubber gloves covering the wrists and forearms.
- Pay particular attention to the hems of your clothes: protect your wrists, ankles and neck
- Protect your eyes and face with a visor

PREVENTING GIANT HOGWEED FROM GROWING

Plants growing in isolation or covering a small area of land

- You can cut the root of young plants with a sharp round shovel. Start at the beginning of the spring and repeat every two weeks in order to weaken the plants
- Repeat the cutting each year over several years in order to completely get rid of the plant
- Use a tool that rotates and tills soil, such as a rototiller, to get rid of small plants growing in abundance
- To limit regrowth, if the area has few obstacles, cover it with geotextile fabric once the plants have been eliminated and the clonal colony is minor

Mature plants or ones covering a large area

- Cut about 15 cm from the ground
- Repeat at least 2 or 3 times over the spring
- Cut the root to a depth of about 20 cm under the soil surface. Use a sharp round shovel
- Work the soil, turning it at a depth of about 24 cm, for example. This will limit regrowth of plants
- Dry the cut plants
- If the plants bear seeds, avoid spreading them
- Destroy the umbels by placing them in securely closed, sturdy plastic bags. Leave bags in the sun for a least a week
- Do not compost any part of the plant
- To prevent giant hogweed from invading your land again, you can grow new plants in the area cleared. Preferably choose plants that are native to your area and grow quickly. Check with your local garden center



AFTER HANDLING GIANT HOGWEED

- Remove your clothing and take off your gloves by turning them inside out
- Make sure that clothes worn during handling of plants do not come into contact with other clothes or objects in order not to contaminate them with sap
- Wash your clothes in the washing machine before wearing them again
- With water and soap, wash tools (shears or trimmers for example) that came into contact with the plant's sap
- Wash your hands and face with soap and water

ALLERGIC REACTIONS CAUSED BY GIANT HOGWEED

Description:

Giant hogweed is a poisonous exotic plant. The sap of giant hogweed contains toxins that are activated by light (natural or artificial UV rays). Contact with giant hogweed sap, combined with exposure to light, causes pain and skin lesions similar to burns.

Symptoms:

Painful and sometimes serious lesions may appear up to 48 hours after skin comes into contact with giant hogweed sap. Lesions are characterized by:

- Redness and swelling of the skin
- Blisters
- Superficial or more serious (first or second-degree) burns

If you have second-degree burns with blisters, contact Info-Santé 811 to obtain further information on treatment of burns. You can also see your doctor for a prescription of appropriate treatment.

IMPORTANT – PERMIT REQUIRED FROM THE MORIN-HIGHTS MUNICIPALITY FOR ALL WORK DONE IN THE SHORELINE.

Because giant hogweed can be located near riverbanks and wetland areas, a permit from the municipality must be issued to carry out any work in the protected zone.

For a permit to be issued, you will need to provide the following:

- The permit application form, duly completed and signed, which you will find under the following link: https://www.morinheights.com/IMG/pdf/waterfront_intervention_dock_construction.pdf
- A re-vegetation plan for the riverbank (no mulch, gravel, rockery, machinery, mowing or other material or work limiting the growth of plants is authorized in or around the riverbank).
- Explanation of how you will remove the giant hogweed (work must be done manually and with manual tools only when you are in the riverbank).

It is very important that no other work is done before the permit is issued