

## Prevention and Control

If you suspect Giant Hogweed is on your property, please call the Giant Hogweed Hotline and describe the plant so staff can verify its identity. Arrangements will be made to visit your property to confirm the presence of the weed and discuss management options with you.

Mowing, cutting and weed whacking are not recommended as a means of control, as the plant's large perennial root system quickly sends up new growth. Also, these tactics are risky because they increase the opportunities for homeowners to come in contact with the plant's poisonous sap.

Giant Hogweed seeds can be wind-blown 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 used in decorative arrangements and discarded outdoors can start a new patch of Giant Hogweed. Be careful not to spread the plant by seed or division.

Both the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and United States Department of Agriculture strongly encourage homeowners/landowners to call the Giant Hogweed Hotline as the first step towards managing a suspected Giant Hogweed infestation.

### GIANT HOGWEED HOTLINE

**1-845-256-3111**

Naja Kraus, DEC Weed Specialist  
Forest Health & Protection  
Program Botanist  
NYS\_DEC Div of Lands & Forests  
21 South Putt Corners Road  
New Paltz, NY 12561  
EMAIL: [nekraus@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:nekraus@gw.dec.state.ny.us)

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Animal & Plant Health  
Inspection Service  
Plant Protection & Quarantine  
8327 Kanona Road  
Avoca, NY 14889  
(607) 566-2212



# Giant Hogweed

*Heracleum mantegazzianum*

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





## About *Heracleum mantegazzianum*

Giant Hogweed is a member of the carrot or parsley family (Apiaceae) introduced into Europe and North America in the early 1900s. The plant's name comes from Hercules, of ancient mythological fame and is aptly described as robust in appearance.

It is native to the Caucasus region of Eurasia. Its massive size and imposing appearance made it desirable for arboretums and gardens. Giant Hogweed 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 and Washington.

### 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, skin contaminated with plant juices, must be moist (perspiration) and then exposed to sunlight. Other plants in the Giant Hogweed family are also capable of causing this reaction, known as Phytophotodermatitis (phyto = plant, photo = light and dermatitis = skin rash).



Giant Hogweed is a Federal Noxious Weed, making it unlawful to propagate, sell or transport. Since 1998, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and Cornell Cooperative Extension have been surveying for this weed through the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey Program.

We need your help in locating new sites of Giant Hogweed. If you see this weed, please report its occurrence by calling Giant Hogweed Hotline.

**TOLL FREE**  
**Giant Hogweed Hotline:**  
**1-800-554-4501 Ext. 58760**



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 the seeds.

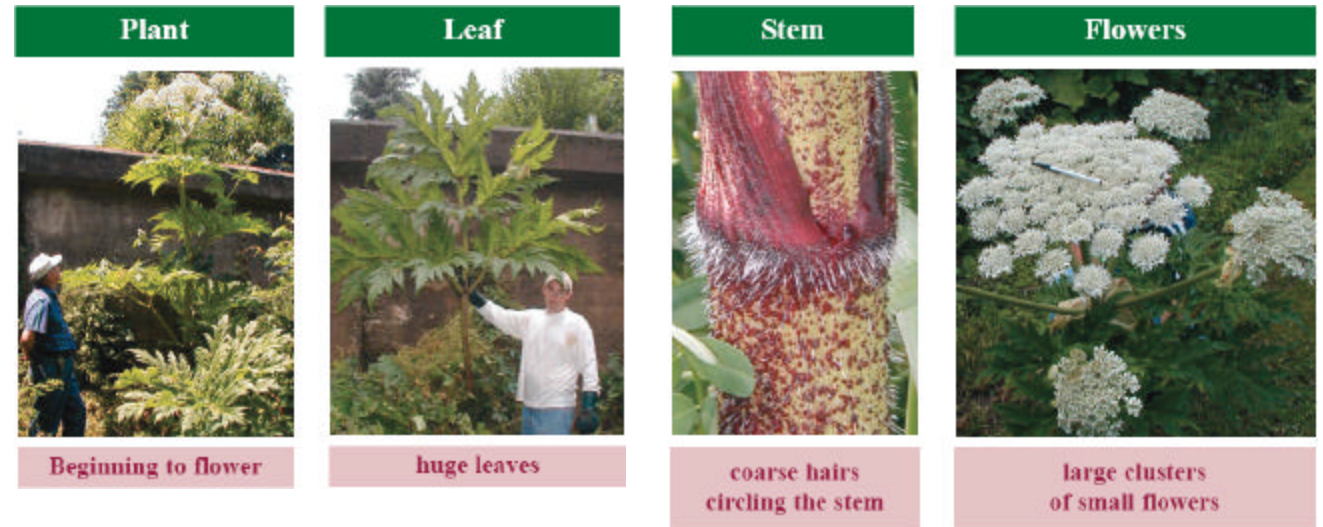
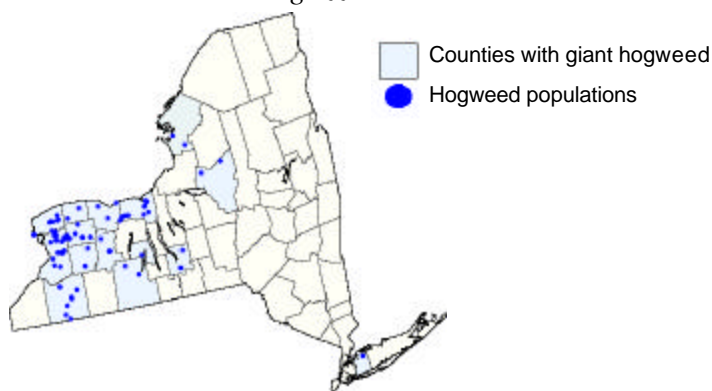
## How to Recognize Giant Hogweed

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

- **Flowers** are numerous, small and white in June or July, clustered into a flat-topped umbel up to 2 ½ feet across.
- **Stems** are hollow, ridged, 2-4 inches in diameter, 8-14 feet 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 feet across.
- **Fruit** (including the seed) is dry, flattened, oval and about 3/8 inches long and tan with brown lines.

## Giant Hogweed in New York

*Heracleum mantegazzianum*



## 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.



### Rosette of leaves

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



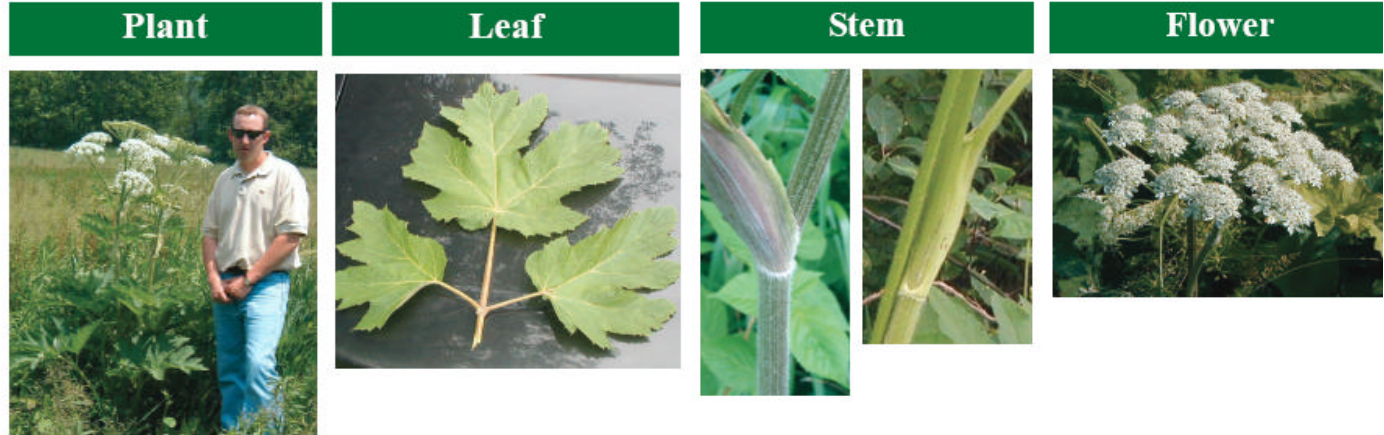
### Flowering Stems

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

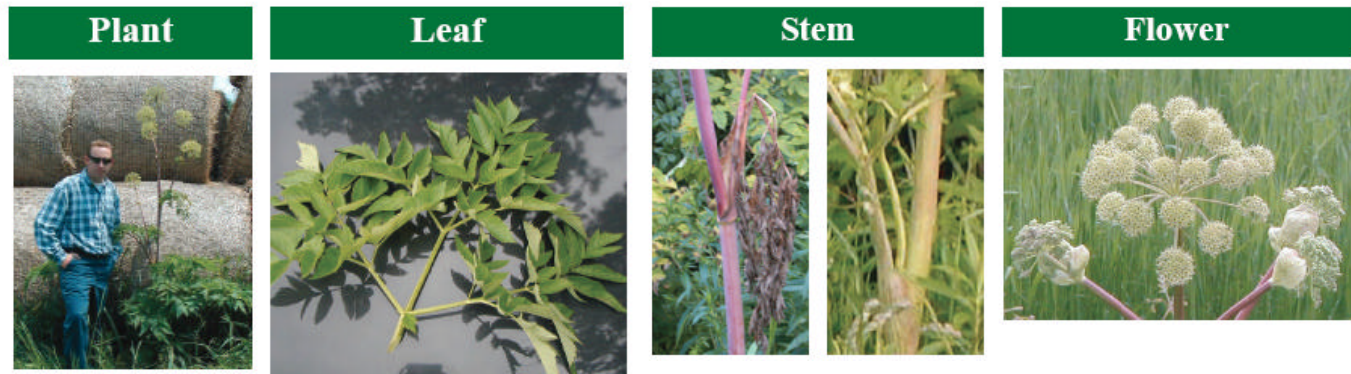


## Similar Plants Commonly Mistaken for Giant Hogweed

**Cow Parsnip** (*Heraclium lanatum*) is a native plant that is mostly likely to be confused with Giant Hogweed. Cow Parsnip is smaller, reaching a height of 5-8'. Unlike Giant Hogweed, the stem maybe 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 1/2' in diameter. Cow Parsnip generally flowers from early June through early July in the Northeast, 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 the northeast.



**Poison Hemlock** (*Conium macalatum*) 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 the northeast.

