

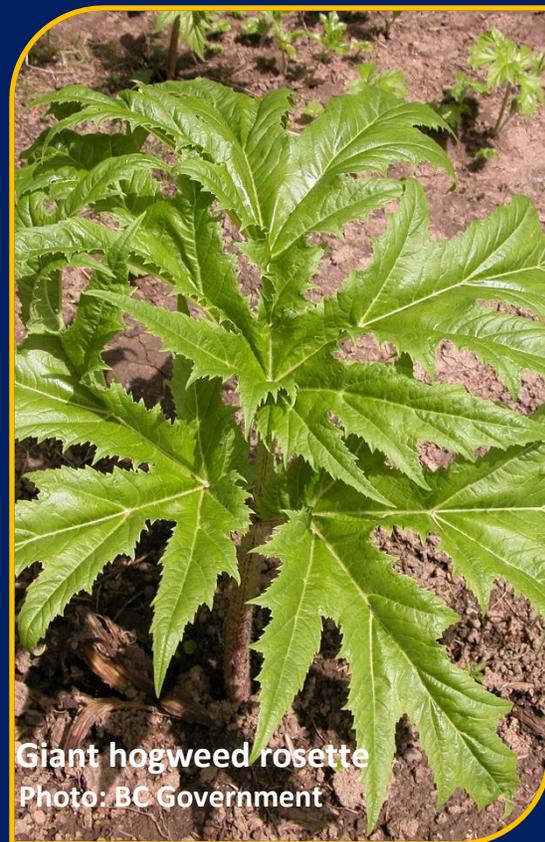
INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

Giant hogweed **WARNING – TOXIC!** (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS PLANT?

DESCRIPTION

- Native to the Caucasus; occurs throughout North America.
- Grows from a single hollow stem up to 5m in height when in flower.
- Stems are 5 - 10cm in diameter, ridged, green with reddish or purple spotting, and have small, white hairs.
- Leaves are light to dark green, coarsely toothed, deeply incised, and alternate with a smooth top and bristled underside.
- Lower leaves are much larger than leaves higher on the stem.
- In their second to fifth year plants produce multiple umbrella-shaped flower clusters up to 80cm in diameter around mid-June.
- Individual flowers are tiny and white to light pink in colour.
- Fruit is green turning to brown as it ripens.
- **WARNING:** Stems contain phototoxic sap which can cause extreme burns and potential blindness if sap gets into eyes.



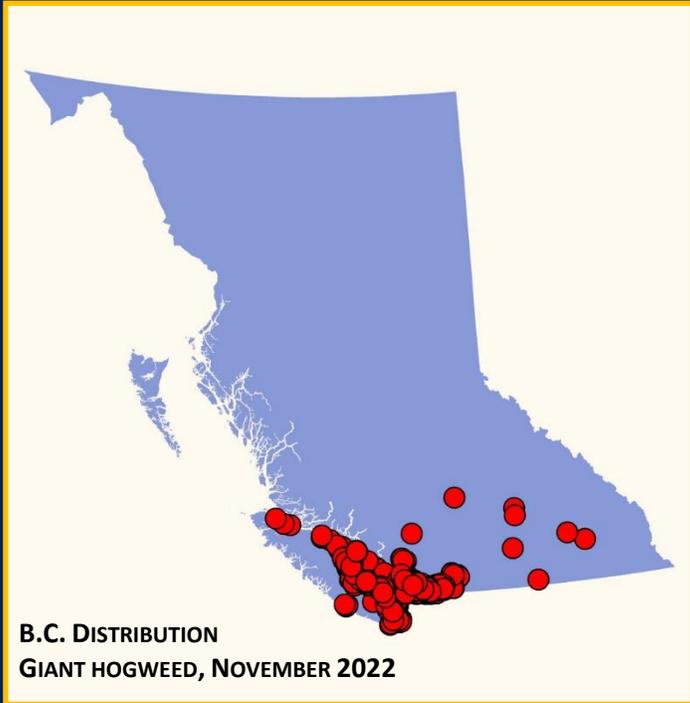
PRIMARY THREATS: Giant hogweed exposure to bare skin can cause phytophotodermatitis - **extreme burns** when exposed to sunlight. This condition may become recurrent for decades after exposure. Can form monocultures and negatively impact riparian habitats as well.



BIOLOGY & SPREAD

- Prolific seed producer: each plant produces an average of 20,000 seeds.
- Seed can be distributed up to 10m by wind or float for up to 72 hours down waterways.
- Seeds may also be dispersed via garden waste and vehicle travel.
- Plants die off after producing seed, but if flowers are removed too early plants will rebloom the following year.
- Less than 5% of seeds remain viable in the soil after 3 years.
- There is some self pollination, but the majority is performed by insects.
- Often confused with the native look-a-like species cow parsnip.

Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)



HABITAT

- Giant hogweed prefers rich and damp soil but can tolerate lower-nutrient habitats. It is often found along roadsides, rights-of-way, ditches, wetlands, stream banks, unmanaged agricultural fields, and forest ravines. Can be found from 50 - 2000m in elevation and in areas with annual rainfall of 1000 – 2000mm.

DISTRIBUTION & Status

- Noxious in all regions under the BC *Weed Control Act*.
- Infestations occur in the Central Kootenay, Lower Mainland, and Vancouver Island regions.
- Management goal is regional containment and reduction in extent. Attempt to manage all known sites.

REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES

Download the App!



www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species



Giant hogweed in flower

Photo: BC Government



Close-up of Giant hogweed stem

Photo: Leslie J. Mehrhoff,
University of Connecticut

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **REPORT** new sightings
- **Avoid any contact with skin**
- **Warn** other area users if seen
- **Remove** from ornamental gardens using proper PPE
- **Treat** Giant hogweed before disturbing a site with digging, mowers, or machinery

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/invasive-species/priority-species/priority-plants>

