

# Please call 1-866-invader if you suspect you have found this species

## Giant hogweed

*Heracleum mantegazzianum*

**Other common names:** cartwheel-flower, giant cow parsnip, giant cow parsley, wild parsnip

**USDA symbol:** HEMA17

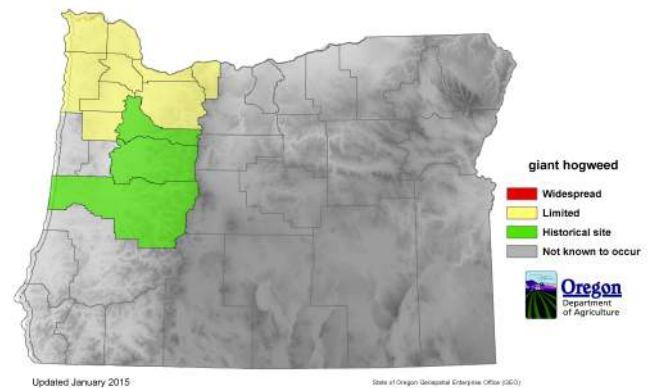
**ODA rating:** A and T



**Introduction:** Giant hogweed is a native of the Caucasus Mountain region of Asia. It was imported for planting in the arboreturns and private gardens of Europe and North America early in the twentieth century. Because it is a prolific seeder, it soon escaped and naturalized in surrounding areas, especially riparian and urban sites. It is a significant weed species in parts of Europe, England, Scotland, Scandinavia and Germany. In North America it grows in Ontario and British Columbia, Canada, Maine, Maryland, New York, Washington State and Oregon.

**Distribution in Oregon:** For a collection of spatial information on the distribution of this plant in Oregon go to <http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/Weeds/Pages/WeedMapper.aspx>

**Description:** Giant hogweed is a robust member of the carrot family (Apiaceae) noted for its huge leaves and an umbrella-like flowerhead. As a short-lived perennial, it frequently grows a stalk 10-15 feet tall splotched with reddish-purple blotches and pustules. The stalks are hollow with a three to four inch diameter; flower heads may attain a two to three foot diameter. Flowers generally develop in two to four years with bloom time occurring in May-July. Leaves are also impressive growing three to five feet wide, are compound and deeply incised. This plant closely resembles the common native cow parsnip which rarely exceeds six feet high sporting a flower head only 8-12 inches wide.



**Impacts:** Giant hogweed poses a health hazard to humans. The plant exudes a clear watery sap, sensitizing skin to ultraviolet radiation. Exposing human skin to the plant sap or smoke from burning hogweed often causes severe burns to the affected areas resulting in blistering and painful dermatitis. Blisters can later develop into purplish or blackened scars. In addition to the health risks, hogweed quickly becomes a garden pest, overrunning flower beds and readily escaping to adjacent natural areas. It has naturalized in many of the places where it was introduced, and is one of the most invasive weeds in Europe.

**Biological controls:** Biological control agents are not used on "A" listed weeds in Oregon. When the weed is found in the state, it is targeted for eradication or containment.



Oregon Department of Agriculture • Noxious Weed Control Program  
635 Capitol Street NE • Salem, OR 97301 • 503-986-4621  
[www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/Weeds/Pages/Default.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/Weeds/Pages/Default.aspx)

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