Giant Hogweed
(Heracleum mantegazzianum)
Guidance & Control

What is it?
A large member of the carrot family, brought in as an ornamental plant from its native range in south eastern Europe.

Where is it found?
Generally near watercourses and in damp meadows, though it can be found on waste ground.

Why is it an issue?
It is highly invasive and non native.

Each plant can produce up to 50,000 seeds which can survive for up to 15 years.

Banks of watercourses colonised by the plant are likely to erode more rapidly than those protected by native grasses and other species.

Contact with the cut material in sunlight produces a skin reaction in almost all cases.

Blisters occur 24 to 48 hours after exposure, and dense pigmentation is visible after three to five days. Damaged skin will heal very slowly; leaving residual pigmentation that can develop into phytophotodermatitis - a type of dermatitis that flares up in sunlight and for which there is no straightforward treatment. Cut stems and leaves remain active for several hours.

It is capable of growing to a height of up to 5 metres (15 feet)
What does it look like?

- A giant cow parsley with deeply divided, light green spiky leaves.
- The plant appears in March as a rosette of leaves.
- As the season progresses, a stout stem, often with purplish blotches, pushes upwards, reaching perhaps 5 metres (15 feet) in July.
- It produces a flat topped flower head up to half a metre across, with several subsidiary flower heads. These flower heads have many individual white florets.
- The plant takes 3-4 years to reach maturity, then flowers and dies.

Native Hogweed

There is a native hogweed which is similar in appearance, but much smaller, with darker green leaves. It generally does not grow above 2 metres.
What should I do if I find it?

If it is on land which you own or over which you have control follow one of the following strategies:-

**Chemical**

- **Glyphosate formulations** are those most commonly used as there are formulations which are permitted for use in or near water.

- **Triclopyr** can be very successful as it leaves grasses, which compete with seedlings which may germinate when light becomes available, undamaged. **It cannot be used near water.**

    The usual application method is by **overall spray application**, during late March/April with a follow up by **stem injection** in July to deal with any plants pushing up flowering stems which were missed at the first application.

- **Foliage wiping** may be an alternative where overall spray application might affect non target species which it is desired to retain.

    * **Timing** of operations is critical
    * In all cases make sure that you are **properly protected**

The use of professional products requires appropriate National Proficiency Tests Council certification and application in or near water requires permission from the Environment Agency.
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### Physical

- **Cutting the flowering stem** is a last resort method. It is worthwhile as it will prevent the majority of seed set, but small flowering shoots may appear at the base of the stem.

- **Cutting the rootstock** at least 10 to 15 cm below ground in March or early April is effective. Young seedlings which appear during the growing season can be hoed.

- **Mowing** can be effective if ground conditions are suitable, it may be needed at least 6 times a year and continued for at least two seasons.

- **Rotovation** can provide some control, but will need to be repeated several times at suitable intervals.

- **Grazing** will prevent flowering, but will not kill the plants. Some animals may have greater susceptibility to the sap. The plant can send up flowering stems when the grazing animals are removed.

The key to successful control is continuing monitoring and following up as required. Seedlings may continue to appear for several years.

### What should I do if I need more guidance or see it on other property?

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