

Giant Hogweed

Scan for more information



Species Description

Scientific name: *Heracleum mantegazzianum*

Native to: Caucasus mountains in south west Russia and Georgia

Habitat: Widespread, most common on river banks

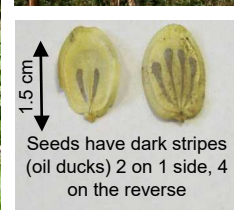
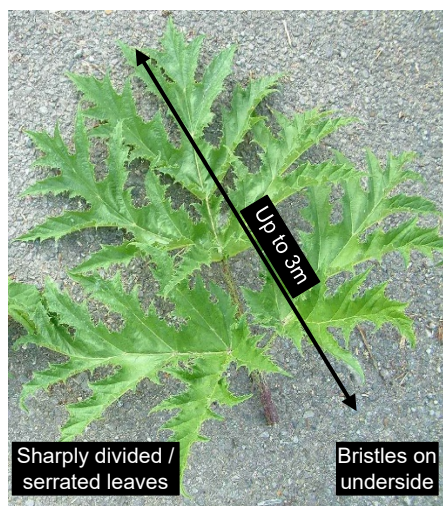
Easy to identify when fully grown by height, size of leaves and size of flowers. Can be confused with native hogweed when not fully grown or when growth is stunted (e.g. regrowth after cutting).

Initially the species was brought to Northern Ireland as an ornamental plant of parks and gardens. Its seeds can travel on the wind and in water, meaning that it can travel relatively easily in the right conditions. Spreads solely by seeds, mainly through deliberate planting, wind dispersal and in water courses. Now common across Northern Ireland. Contact with any part of this plant must be avoided as even minute amounts of sap can cause blistering of the skin following exposure to sunlight. Other negative impacts include out-competing native flora, river bank erosion and increase in flood risk. Can cause delays and additional costs on development sites where the plant must be removed as controlled waste in order to comply with legislation.

Under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 it is offence to intentionally keep; grow or cultivate; transport to, from or within Northern Ireland, use or exchange Giant hogweed; or to release it into the environment.



Key ID Features



Report any sightings via; CEDaR Online Recording - <https://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>, iRecord app or Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - <http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting>

Identification throughout the year

Spring



Summer



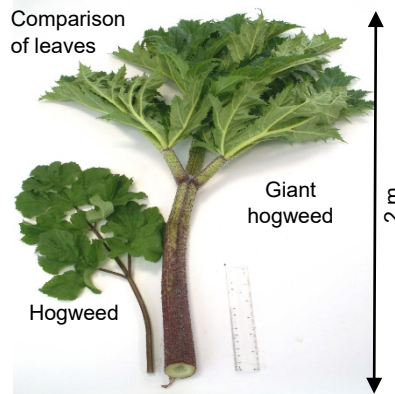
Winter



Similar Species

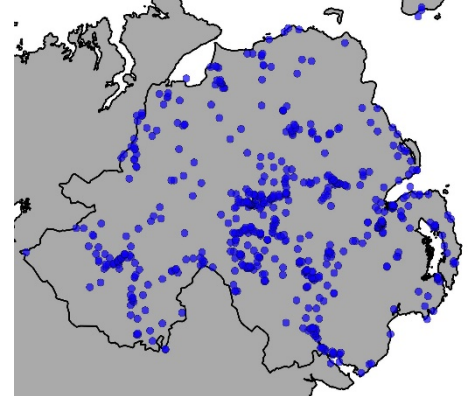


When in full height it is difficult to confuse giant hogweed with any other plant. While still growing or stunted, possibly as a result of disturbance, it can be confused with some other native plants. The most likely species which it might be confused with is hogweed. Key differences between hogweed and giant hogweed include the height, width of stem, size of flower head and size of seed.



Distribution

Widespread and common across much of the Northern Ireland. It is often associated with large rivers.



Source: NBN atlas Northern Ireland - <https://northernireland-species.nbnatlas.org/species/NBNSYS0000003711> - Check website for current distribution

References and further reading:

Blamey, M, Fitter, R and Fitter, A (2003) *The Wild Flowers of Britain and Ireland. The Complete Guide to the British and Irish Flora.* A & C Black
 Booy, O and Wade, P M (2007) *Giant Hogweed Management in the United Kingdom*. RPS Group plc
 Pyšek P, Cock, M J W, Nentwig, W & Ravn, H P (2007) *Ecology and Management of Giant Hogweed (Heracleum mantegazzianum)*. CAB International
 Stace, C (1999) *Field Flora of the British Isles*. Cambridge University Press
 Photos from: Olaf Booy, Steve Smith, Vicky White

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

Adapted for Northern Ireland Environment Agency 2020