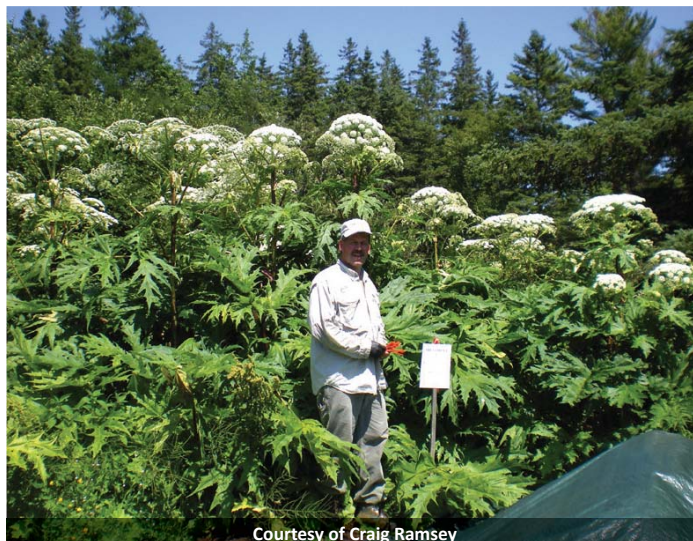


GIANT HOGWEED

Heracleum mantegazzianum

Status in Maine: localized

WARNING: Avoid contact with plant sap.



Courtesy of Craig Ramsey

Description: A very tall (over 8' and sometimes as tall as 15+'), monocarpic perennial herb; member of the carrot family. Plants require 3-5 years to reach maturity and flower. **Leaves:** Enormous (lower leaves can reach 5' wide), alternate, ternately or pinnately lobed, and deeply toothed. Bristly hairs cover the leaf underside, leaf stem and plant stalk. **Flowers:** Terminal compound umbel with many small white flowers, up to 2½' across and may produce smaller satellite umbels on other branches. **Fruit/seeds:** Elliptical, flat, dry fruits; narrowly winged; ~½" long. **Stem:** Hollow, ridged stem (2-4" diam.), covered with purple blotches and bristles. **Root:** Sturdy 2' long taproot. **WARNING:** *Sap contains a chemical that causes severe dermatitis when skin is exposed to sun. Sap can also cause eye injury, including blindness. Wear safety gear when working with this plant and avoid contact with sap.*

Native range: Caucasus region of Eurasia. **How arrived in U.S.:** Introduced in the early 1900s as an ornamental.

Reproduction: By seed. One plant can produce 5,000 to as many as 100,000 seeds. Plant dies after flowering. Long distance dispersal is possible by water (seeds float for hours) and by humans collecting its ornamental seed heads. It has a short term persistent seed bank.

Habitat: Disturbed sites, roadsides, waste areas, agricultural areas, stream banks. Some tolerance to shade as well as salt spray.



GIANT HOGWEED

Similar native species: Giant hogweed is easily twice as big as its native lookalikes. Cow parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*) has fuzzy fine hairs on stem. Angelica (*Angelica atropurpurea*) has a smooth, waxy, green-purple stem and globe-shaped inflorescences.

Similar non-native species: Wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*) is much smaller, has ribbed stems and yellow flowers. Another hogweed, *Heracleum sphondylium*, is half as large, hairier, with less purple spotting.

Control methods: Digging, gouging, or rototilling that severs the root crown from the tap root will kill the plant. Mowing has not been proven effective. Because of its enormous taproot, multiple applications of triclopyr to leaves and stems during the growing season may be needed. Glyphosate applied when leaf buds begin to appear on the root crown is also effective. ***Special rules apply to herbicide use in or near wetlands and waterbodies - see the section in the back of this guide titled "Use of Herbicides to Control Invasive Plants in or Near Wetlands and Waterbodies." Control upstream populations first. REMEMBER TO WEAR PROTECTIVE GEAR AROUND THIS PLANT.***

