

LEPA weed of the week: Giant Hogweed



Giant Hogweed

Habitat: Giant hogweed grows moist to wet soils high in organic content, typical of riparian habitats. It prefers disturbed, sunny to partly sunny sites. Seeds and plants do not survive waterlogged soils.

Identification:

Stems: Stems are single, stout and hollow, with dark reddish-purple spots, and 5-10 cm diameter. Stems and leaf stalks are covered with stiff hairs and small bubbles containing toxic sap.

Leaves: Leaves are alternate, deeply cut, having 3 leaflets which are deeply lobed with sharply toothed leaf margins, and can be as large as 1 to 1.5 meters across. These are different from Upper surface of the leaf is almost hairless. Upper leaves are progressively smaller. Leaf stalks are purple-spotted.

Flowers: Flowers are white (sometimes pinkish) large, and compound umbels with rounded tops, up to 1 m diameter. Petals can be 1cm long and sepals are triangular.

Seeds: Seed capsules are 1.5-3.5 cm long and up to 1.5 cm wide and contain up to 16 seeds which are 4-7 mm long and 2-4 mm wide.

DO NOT TOUCH GIANT HOGWEED PLANTS. They contain a sap that can cause severe blistering. It is very important to wear protective gloves and clothing – a disposable paint suit and gloves works well – and also protect your faces and eyes if you need to come in contact with these plants.

Also, do not confuse it with its much tamer relative, the cow parsnip, pictured below. Cow parsnip is much less toxic and only occasionally does it cause skin irritation or photosensitivity, but it is still recommended to wear gloves when handling cow parsnip.

Follow this link to get more information on differentiating giant hogweed from cow parsnip:

<https://www.thinglink.com/scene/680059206853722113?buttonSource=viewLimits>



cow parsnip