

## Chemical Control

A glyphosate based weed killer approved for use near water can be used in most sites or a triclopyr product in areas away from water courses:

Please take care when using herbicides, and carefully consider your impacts on nearby land or waterways. Read the label carefully, and always use appropriate safety equipment.

**Foliar spray:** Use the manufacturers recommended concentration in a knapsack sprayer to spot treat individual plants or broadscale spraying of dense growth. Spraying should only be carried out in cool, dry, calm weather. Note – on river banks the area should be reseeded with suitable native species soon after to stabilize the soil and suppress weed regrowth.

**Stem injection:** Can be used for smaller infestations or in sensitive areas but extreme caution is advised due to the risk of contact with the toxic sap.



Herbicide control

Root cutting

Giant hogweed stem

## Timing

Herbicide treatment for Giant hogweed is most effective in the spring or early summer (April – May) while the plant is actively growing but still small enough to be easily treated. Seedlings germinated after the first treatment should be spotsprayed each month. It may take several years of meticulous annual treatments to clear the infestation, after which you should perform annual checks to control any new seedlings growth.

All Plant Protection Products should be used in accordance with the product label and with Good Plant Protection Practice as prescribed in the European Communities (Authorization, Placing on the Market, Use and Control of Plant Protection Products) Regulations, 2003 (S.I. No. 83 of 2003). Herbicides / pesticides authorised for professional use may only be used by persons who have completed the prescribed training and hold the relevant specified certificate(s).  
<http://www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/sud/>

## Further Information

Further Information about Giant hogweed and other invasive species can be found at:

<http://biodiversity.galwaycommunityheritage.org/>  
<http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/projects/invasive-species/>  
<http://www.invasivespeciesireland.com>

## Contact Details

To report Giant hogweed or other problem species, or for advice on planning a control programme in your area contact the Galway County Biodiversity Project Manager Elaine O'Riordan.

**Phone:** 091-495921

**Email:** [invasivespecies@galwaycoco.ie](mailto:invasivespecies@galwaycoco.ie)



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council



NUI Galway  
OÉ Gaillimh



# the spread of INVASIVE SPECIES



# Giant Hogweed



## About

Introduced from the Caucasus Mountains in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Giant hogweed, *Heracleum mantegazzianum* is a particularly unwelcome invasive species that has become established in parts of County Galway. It favours damp habitats such as riverbanks and roadsides and ditches.

## How to recognise it?

Giant hogweed is similar in appearance to our native hogweed, however, it is much larger and can grow to 3 – 5 metres tall. It has large umbrella-shaped flower heads bearing thousands of tiny white flowers. The leaves are lush green and jagged in appearance and may reach up to 2 m long. The hollow ridged stems are green with reddish blotches. They are covered with white hairs and may measure up to 10 cm in diameter.



Giant hogweed along canal

## Why is it a problem?

Giant hogweed is a hazard to human health as it produces toxic sap in the stems and leaves. Contact with the sap provokes a severe reaction in the skin on exposure to sunlight causing blistering and scarring which may persist for several years.

Giant hogweed is also an environmental hazard as it spreads rapidly forming dense colonies which crowd out native plant species. In the winter it dies back exposing bare soil which is vulnerable to erosion by weather or flood waters. This may lead to siltation of rivers and loss of spawning beds for fish or flooding.

## How does it spread?

The plant lives for about 4 years, flowers once, sets seed and dies. Each plant can produce 5000 seeds which may remain viable in the soil for 1 – 5 years. Seeds can be transported short distances by wind or further afield in water or from movement of contaminated soil.

## Legislation

Giant hogweed is listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) which makes it an offence under Regulation 49 to *plant, disperse, allow or cause to grow* this plant in the Republic of Ireland.

Regulation 50 makes it an offence to *import, buy, sell, breed, reproduce or propagate, advertise, offer or export for sale, publish a price list, transport or distribute* any species on the Third schedule. (This regulation is not in effect pending Ministerial notice)

A licence may be obtained in certain circumstances to permit these activities.

## What can you do?

- Do not touch the plant.
- Do not cut or strim the plant.
- Report the location of the weed to Galway County Council or the National Biodiversity Data Centre.
- Inform landowners who have Giant hogweed on their property.
- Do not dump plant cuttings or soil elsewhere.
- Control: Use the most suitable method to remove the infestation from your property.

## Control

Full protective clothing, including rubber gloves, boots and a face shield are required when working around Giant hogweed to avoid the sap coming into contact with the skin.

## Manual Control

**Cutting** is largely ineffective in controlling Giant hogweed and not recommended due to the risk of exposure to the toxic sap.

**Root cutting:** Individual plants may be killed by cutting in to the root at a 45 degree angle with a spade 15 cm below ground level in April or May when the soil is moist and soft.

**Grazing:** By sheep, cattle, goats or pigs from April to early autumn over several years can be effective in controlling the weed in suitable sites.



Giant hogweed plant towers above technician