

Invasive non native species: Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)

Giant Hogweed can reach up to 3 metres tall with leaves up to 1m in diameter and umbels of flowers that can be 80cm in diameter. It is invasive and as it likes moist soil is often found near rivers and streams and also on waste ground. It produces hundreds of seeds that can remain viable for 8 years and are dispersed naturally or moved around by humans, for example on clothing.



Giant Hogweed is not native to the UK and can cause a range of problems:

Environmental impact: it can form dense stands that outcompete native plants and reduce biodiversity

Health and social impact: the plant's sap, when combined with sunlight can cause severe burns that are long lasting and can recur for many years.

Economic impact: it can prevent footpaths, cycle paths and land being used due to its effects on human health. Treatment is costly because of the need for specialist equipment over many years. There is also the potential cost of legal action if land owners have Giant Hogweed present that causes injury.

Local authorities currently spend over £365,000 a year treating Giant Hogweed infestations in the UK



Biosecurity: you can help stop the spread of invasive non native species, which can cause problems and are expensive to treat, through the following actions:

CHECK your equipment, clothing and footwear
CLEAN everything thoroughly, use hot water if possible

DRY everything, as some species can survive for up to two weeks in damp conditions



Image credits: GBNNSS, Tom Richards, Dragan Marjanovic



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