



This time of the year you will see the old plant stalks and weathered seed heads from last year. The stalks will tower well over your head from 7 to 10 feet high. The native Cow Parsnip will be less than 6 ft. high. By mid May the large lush green leaves will be well above the grasses.



. Do not touch this plant when it is actively growing, without protective cover or eye protection. Sap from this plant is very toxic to the skin, especially when plants are in flower or actively growing. Large, painful burns and blisters will occur if sap contacts the skin in the presence of sunlight. Eye exposure can lead to permanent loss of vision. A day or two after exposure “sunburn symptoms can occur with a blackening of the skin and severe scarring can result. Skin can remain sensitive (phytophotodermatitis reaction) to light up to seven years after exposure.

This plant was a native of Asia introduced as landscape plant because of its unique size. Giant hogweed is striking due to its huge size growing to a height of 7 to 20 feet tall. Stalks can be 2 to 4 inches in diameter with leaves up to 5 feet wide, topped with a huge flower up to 2 ½ feet wide, producing thousands of seeds, commonly showing up on the forest edges or fertile disturbed areas. Giant Hogweed is currently regulated by USDA as a federal noxious weed.

It appears that birds are spreading the plant by feeding on the seeds. It can also be moved by ATV's, snowmobiles or field equipment that happens to catch a few of the seeds. The Iron county out break was caused by ATV's traveling thru patches of Hogweed in Gogebic County in Upper Michigan.

Tom Ward, Invasive Species Coordinator with the County Lakes Association is encouraging landowners in the Towns of Meeme and Schleswig to keep an eye out for this plant. Cow Parsnip looks a lot like this plant, causing severe skin irritations from exposure to sunlight. However leaves are much smaller and the plant seldom exceeds seven feet high.

Treating the plant in the spring with glyphosate (Roundup) is effective if continued for several years. Remember to wear protective clothing when working around this plant.

If you should spot this plant contact Tom Ward, 920-588-0047, or tomward@tm.net, we can provide assistance with eradicating this plant.