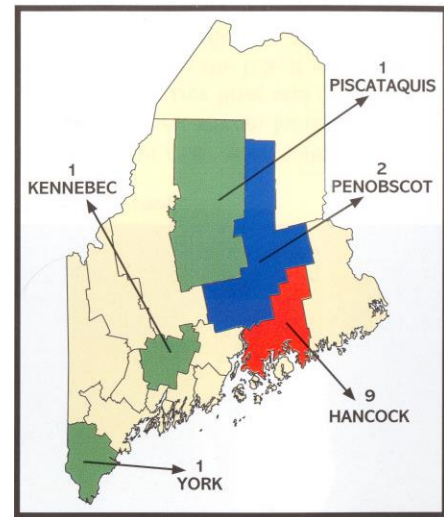




Giant Hogweed

Giant Hogweed was introduced into Europe and North America during the early 1900's from its native Eurasia. Its massive size, flowers, and appearance made it desirable for ornamental gardens. It escaped cultivation in gardens and established itself in rich, moist soils along roadsides, stream banks, and open wooded areas. It is found in Maine and several other states in the Northeast. The color coded map below shows the number of known distribution sites of Giant Hogweed in Maine as of 2011. Additional sites have been confirmed in Windham, Sebago, and Lisbon Falls, not shown on map. There are now over 30 confirmed sites in Maine, as of 2015.



Hazards of Giant Hogweed

Giant Hogweed is a health hazard because of its ability to cause skin irritation and blistering in susceptible people. The sap of the plant causes blistering within 24-48 hours after initial contact. The sap can also cause painless red blotching of the skin that later turn to purple or brownish scarring that can last for years.



For severe reaction after initial contact, the skin needs to be moist, usually with sweat, and exposed to direct sunlight. Giant Hogweed is listed as a Federal Noxious plant making it illegal to propagate, transport, and cultivate in the US.





Giant Hogweed Recognition





Giant Hogweed is easily recognizable when it is blooming.

Flowers: Are numerous, flat, white in appearance, and up to 2.5 feet across.

Stems: Are hollow and ridged with a typical diameter of 1"-3", can be larger 2"-4", and a typical height of 8'-14' tall. Can reach heights of 15'-20' tall. The stems will have purple blotches and coarse white hairs. The hairs will circle the stem at the base of leaf stalks.

Leaves: The leaves are compound, lobed, deeply incised and large up to 5' across and 2' in length.

Seeds: Dry, flattened and oval, 3/8" long, tan with brown lines.

GIANT HOGWEED			
			
HEIGHT	STEM	LEAF	FLOWER
15 to 20 feet	1 to 3 inch diameter Purple blotches, stiff bristles	Compound, lobed, deeply incised; up to 5 feet wide	White flowers, flat-topped, umbrella, up to 2.5 feet across

Giant Hogweed Precautions and Eradication

If you find Giant Hogweed:

Protect yourself: From contact with the plant. Disposable waterproof protective gloves and protective waterproof clothing such as Tyvek should be worn. **Protect your eyes!!!** Blindness can occur if sap gets into your eyes.

Isolate: The area with signage or warning tape.

Eradicate: Hire a professional herbicide applicator or apply the appropriate herbicide following the label directions. Dig up all roots of single plants to ensure that they do not regrow. Wash equipment with water immediately after use. Remove flowers before they turn to seed. **Do Not Burn Plants!!!** The resulting smoke is toxic.

Monitor: The area to ensure that the plants don't regrow or that seeds don't germinate. Report your finding to the Maine Dept. of Agriculture 207-287-3891

What to do if you have skin contact with Giant Hogweed

Wash: Affected area with soap and cold water. Thoroughly wash all clothing worn during exposure.

Protect: Affected area from sun exposure for at least 48 hours.

Contact with Eyes: Thoroughly rinse eyes with water for 15 minutes. Wear sunglasses to protect eyes from sun exposure.

Reaction: Consult physician. Area of reaction may be sensitive to sun exposure for years. Apply sunscreen or sunblock after reaction has cleared to protect skin from sun exposure and painful burning.