



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### GIANT HOGWEED INVADES SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN

Early detection leads to rapid response

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Recently a population of [giant hogweed \(\*Heracleum mantegazzianum\*\)](#) was identified in a City of Sheboygan neighborhood. This is the only known population in the southeastern region of Wisconsin. As a [prohibited invasive plant](#), all populations must be reported and controlled to keep them from spreading further. The affected Sheboygan landowners are very cooperative and eager to have the plants controlled on their properties. In addition to shading out and killing native plants, this massive non-native species has a sap that can cause severe burns when it contacts exposed skin. The [Southeastern Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium, Inc.](#) (SEWISC) is partnering with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to implement an early detection, rapid response protocol to control the outbreak.

Giant hogweed typically grows 6 to 15 feet tall when flowering. Leaves can grow to 3 feet across. Younger non-flowering plants are shorter, but may still have large leaves. Each large (6 to 20 inches) white umbrella-shaped flower cluster is actually made up of thousands of smaller flowers. Flowers are borne on thick stalks, often more than 2 inches in diameter. Stems have red mottling and raised reddish dots, as well as a distinctive ring of hairs where each leaf emerges from the stem.

Don't be fooled! Giant hogweed has several look-alikes that are much more common. It is important that the plants be accurately identified so that any hogweed populations can be controlled as soon as possible, and there are online fact sheets to help with that identification:

- <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/72766.html>
- <http://hyg.ipm.illinois.edu/article.php?id=807>

The most common look-alike plants are [cow parsnip \(\*Heracleum lanatum\*\)](#) and [angelica \(\*Angelica atropurpurea\*\)](#). Both are common native plants that are much smaller than hogweed and have some distinctive features. Cow parsnip stems are narrower and mostly green, without raised dots. They range in height from 4 to 9 feet, with smaller flower clusters that are 6 to 12 inches across. Leaves are less sharply lobed and only grow to about 12 inches across. In contrast, the stems on angelica are light purple throughout and smooth, and the flower clusters form a sphere. Native [elderberry shrubs \(\*Sambucus canadensis\*\)](#) can also fool residents as can non-native and invasive [Queen Anne's lace \(\*Daucus carota\*\)](#) and [wild parsnip \(\*Pastinaca sativa\*\)](#).

If you think you see giant hogweed, use the online resources to distinguish between the distinctive characteristics of hogweed and all of its look-alikes. Only giant hogweed needs to be reported. Photos showing the leaves, flowers and stem can be sent to the DNR at [invasive.species@wi.gov](mailto:invasive.species@wi.gov).

Visit <http://sewisc.org/> to learn more about invasive species education and management in southeastern Wisconsin.

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The Southeastern Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium, Inc. (SEWISC) is a 501(c) 3 non-profit membership organization that promotes efficient and effective management of invasive species throughout an eight-county region in southeastern Wisconsin.