

# Giant Hogweed

*Heracleum mantegazzianum*

Plants · In flower Jun–Aug · an invasive species



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An enormous biennial or perennial umbellifer reaching five metres, with thick hollow green stems blotched purple and covered in coarse bristles, huge jagged leaves up to a metre and a half across, and vast flat white flower heads. Introduced from the Caucasus as an ornamental, it grows along the Nith and other riverbanks and on waste ground around Dumfries.

### BEHAVIOUR

The sap contains furanocoumarins that destroy the skin's protection against ultraviolet light. Contact followed by sunlight causes severe blistering burns, and the affected skin can remain sensitive and re-blister for years afterwards; sap in the eye can cause blindness. Never strim or cut it. It also seeds prolifically along watercourses and shades out native bankside plants.

### WHEN TO SEE IT

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| J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D |
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### QUICK FACTS

|        |                                                             |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| FAMILY | Carrots (Apiaceae)                                          |
| HEIGHT | Up to 5 m                                                   |
| STATUS | Invasive non-native; sap causes severe burns — do not touch |

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