

# Town of Oakville

# Safety Alert

## Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa* L)

Residents are advised to stay clear of Giant Hogweed and Wild Parsnip, noxious plants growing in Oakville in open areas, trails and along creek and rivers.

### What are Giant Hogweed and Wild Parsnip?

Giant Hogweed and Wild Parsnip are members of the parsley or carrot family. Except for their size, both plants look similar to Wild Carrot (also known as Queen Anne's Lace), Cow Parsnip, and others.

### Why be concerned about Giant Hogweed and Wild Parsnip?

The sap of both plants contains chemicals that can cause the skin to become hypersensitive to sunlight and erupt in painful blisters. Casually brushing against a plant without breaking it to expose sap may not be harmful, however it is best to avoid contact with these plants whenever possible.

If you come in contact with the sap, thoroughly wash exposed skin with soap and water and keep the area out of direct sunlight for at least 48 hours. If the skin reacts, seek medical attention.



**Giant Hogweed** may grow as high as six metres and can be distinguished by its stout, green stem which has dark reddish blotching and coarse hairs or bristles. The stems are hollow and can grow 5-10 centimetres in diameter. Leaf stalks produce compound leaves that can expand to 1.5 metres across. Each leaflet is deeply grooved or divided. In summer small, white flowers form together to make up an umbrella-shaped head that can reach 1-metre in diameter.



### Where is Giant Hogweed found?

Giant Hogweed is a biannual plant, spreading mainly by seed along waterways. It can be found in scattered localities across southern Ontario; however, isolated plants have been documented as far north as Haliburton County. Although it may colonize a wide variety of habitats, it is most often found along roadsides, other right of ways, vacant lots, stream and river banks and waste areas. Since it often grows in wet areas, it is considered to be an invasive fresh water weed. In Oakville it has been spotted along Sixteen Mile and Bronte Creeks.



Juvenile Giant Hogweed



**Wild Parsnip** can grow up to 1.5 metres in height. It has a single smooth green stem that is 2 to 5 centimetres thick with few hairs. The leaves are compound, with 2 to 5 sharply toothed leaflet pairs, the leaflets often resembling a mitten. Yellowish green flowers form flat topped umbel-shaped clusters 10 to 20 centimetres across.

### Where is Wild Parsnip found?

Wild Parsnip is a biannual plant most prevalent in old fields and along rural roadways but it is encroaching on maintained park space throughout all parts of Oakville. Because of the high occurrence and

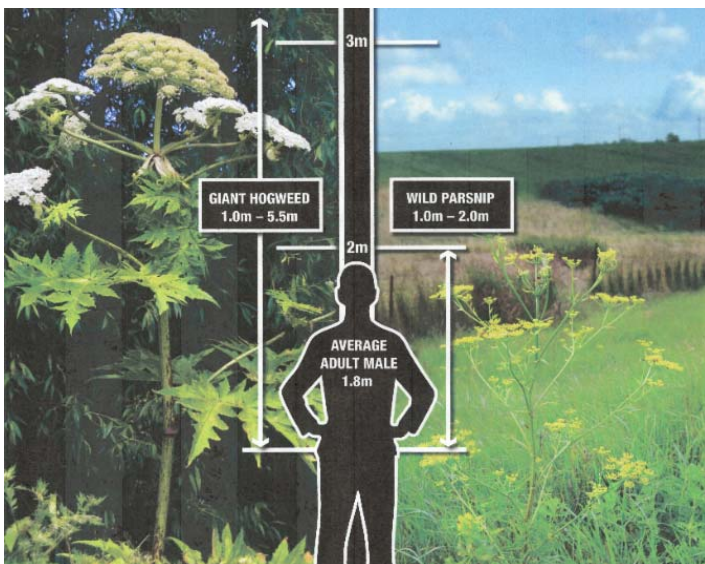
wide distribution of this plant eradication is almost impossible. Treatment will be focused mainly along formal trails and maintained parklands.



Juvenile Wild Parsnip

### What is the Town of Oakville doing?

The Town of Oakville's Parks Department is using a chemical herbicide treatment to control or eradicate Giant Hogweed and Wild Parsnip on public lands. Temporary signage will be posted in all areas being treated 24 hours before application and signs will remain 48 hours after treatment is complete.



Treatment of **Giant Hogweed** is most effective before plants have gone into flower. Individual plants are painted with the herbicide when young, and additional application methods are used as the plants mature.

**Wild Parsnip** is being treated only within two metres of recognized pathways and trails, and areas within two metres of maintained park space. Complete control is not to be expected and caution should be exercised if entering into naturalized or areas beyond these limits.

### Report a Giant Hogweed or Wild Parsnip Sighting

All Hogweed sightings should be reported to ServiceOakville at **905-845-6601** for investigation, tracking, and treatment if appropriate.

Town staff is aware that Wild Parsnip is prevalent throughout town and do not require sightings to be reported. However if you wish to do so, you may contact Service Oakville at **905-845-6601**.

Residents are reminded that many plants could easily be mistaken for Giant Hogweed and Wild Parsnip. These include Angelica, Cow Parsnip and Queen Anne's Lace.

To date, the majority of reported Giant Hogweed cases have turned out to be look-a-like plants.

Acknowledgements to the  
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