

■ **OUTDOORS:** Dangerous plant in parts of Harrison Park, elsewhere in city

# Health unit gives a hogweed heads-up

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Sun Times staff

Health officials advise people who may take a stroll through the wilds of Grey-Bruce this holiday weekend to beware the poisonous giant hogweed.

The plant grows one to 5.5 metres tall and looks a bit like Queen Anne's Lace but with much bigger, white flowers forming an umbrella shape a metre tall.

Skin contact with giant hogweed's sap causes photosensitivity. Affected skin exposed to the sun will blister, burn and may create lesions. Contact with the eyes can lead to temporary or permanent loss of sight.

It is growing now along the footpath at the back end of Harrison Park and elsewhere locally, said Andrew Barton, the health protection manager at the health unit. The plant isn't flowering yet, so it's harder to spot.

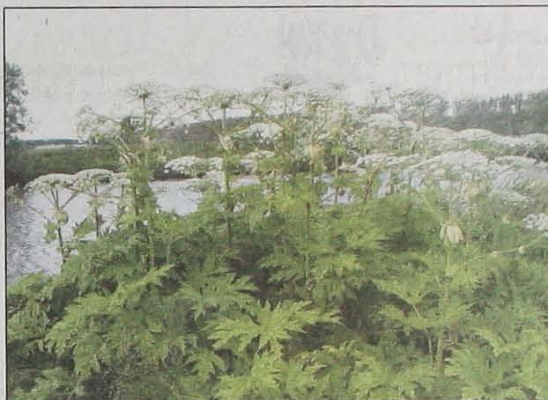
Barton said he will be following up with city officials about the patch which was drawn to his attention Wednesday. He issued a news release as a precaution.

In 2002, an Owen Sound teenager reported developing blisters and scars after coming into contact with giant hogweed.

The city tried to eradicate the plant in the park two years ago, but it's a difficult task.

City parks manager John Howard said in an e-mail he is aware of giant hogweed along a trail on the east side of Harrison Park, in the Parkview ravine and in other areas, including along the rail trail on the west side of the city.

Some have argued that these plants are cow parsnip, the only form of the hogweed genus native to North America, and as native plants they should be allowed to grow, but Howard wrote he has positively identified the plants in Harrison Park as



Submitted photo

Giant hogweed in bloom.

giant hogweed and samples sent to the University of Guelph confirmed it.

The plant, likely introduced as an ornament, is a biennial and

produces flowers only once in its life, according to Howard. It reproduces from seed, not from underground stems or root sections, but one plant can produce

from 1,500 to 100,000 flattened, 1 cm long oval seeds that can lie dormant in the soil for up to 15 years, so eradication is a difficult annual chore.

Because the plants tend to grow in or near streams or watercourses in Harrison Park and other areas in the city, the use of herbicide is controlled. Workers cut the plants off before they flower or the flowers go to seed.

Barton advises anyone who comes in contact with the plant to wash with soap and water and seek medical help for any skin reaction.

People should contact their municipality before attempting to get rid of the plant because of the inherent danger.

Giant hogweed leaves are large, deeply cut with sharp coarse teeth, reaching widths in excess of one metre. Giant hogweed is found along rivers, streams and wetland areas, but can also be found in pastureland.



Amy Trelford and Jen Legge are featured in the 2011 OFAC calendar for the month of May. The caption reads: "Sisters Jen and Amy never imagined a life outside of the city limits when they were growing up. But that all changed when they met their husbands in high school - two beef cattle farmers who also happened to be close friends. Both are now mothers to two young children and have embraced their rural lives, volunteering with various agricultural organizations..."

May

## New book a day by day look at county history

The Brucedale Press and Northern Flyer Design will jointly celebrate the publication of *BRUCE Day by Day* with a reception, art display, and signing in Port Elgin on Thursday, September 23.

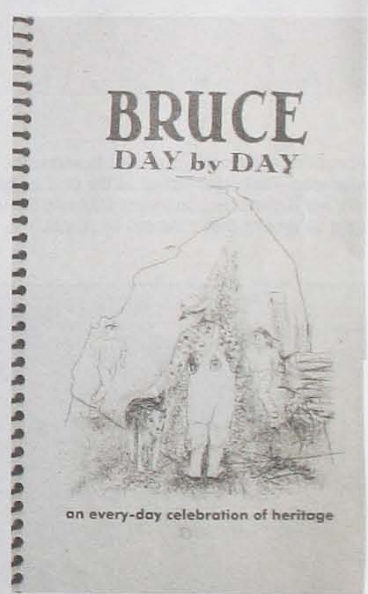
Recently launched, *BRUCE Day by Day* presents an everyday look at Bruce County's heritage. "It's history in day-book format," said artist Kenneth L. Thornburn of Tara. Thornburn created more than 50 drawings used for each week's page spread in the book, including a map of the county. The county crest and tartan appear in full colour, courtesy of Bruce County council.

Researcher and writer Anne Duke Judd of Saugeen Shores compiled the facts and tidbits for each day. She moved to Bruce County 40 years ago this month. "As soon as I arrived, my curiosity sent me looking for stories about the people and communities here," she said.

The book has 112 pages, with space under each date to add family occasions. It works in any year - including

leap year. With printing and binding by Terry Murphy of County Squire Printery in Chesley, it's a made-in-Bruce production from start to finish.

Everyone is welcome to celebrate with the artist and author from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at The Brucedale Press sales office, 682 Goderich Street in downtown Port Elgin. Those who cannot attend can reserve signed copies by calling 519-832-6025 or e-mailing [brucedale@bmts.com](mailto:brucedale@bmts.com)



an every-day celebration of heritage

The cover to *BRUCE Day by Day*