

Town wants residents to wage war on invasive giant hogweed plants

By **CYNTHIA GAMBLE**
Staff Writer



Giant hogweed, which has been described as Queen's Anne lace on steroids— has been found in various locations in Halton Hills. The Town is asking residents to remove any of the weed found on their property, but to use extreme caution as contact with the plant's sap can lead to painful blisters.

File photo study showed results to date of not only effective methods to kill the weed but about the plant itself: it only flowers and produces seed once in its lifetime and then dies. The strategy then is to limit the spread of the weed to stop seed production. While the investigation into giant hogweed continues this year, the Town will destroy this test site by the end of May. The exact time will be weather dependent, and signage will be posted prior to its removal.

Residents, who suspect the plant may be on their property, are recommended to contact a licensed weed removal company to remove the plant or apply an herbicide.

For more details on giant hogweed removal methods and how to report a sighting go to the Conservation Halton website at www.conservationhalton.on.ca and search "giant hogweed" or contact Brenda Van Ryswyk: brendav@hrca.on.ca or 905-336-1158 ext 282.

A weed "on steroids" is invading Halton Hills and the Town needs local residents to be on the lookout before it takes hold.

"Residents are asked to help in the removal and management of the noxious weed, known as giant hogweed," announced Mayor Rick Bonnette at a recent council meeting.

The plant (*heracleum mantegazzianum*) "looks like a Queen's Anne lace on steroids but it is very dangerous to handle," said Bonnette, explaining contact with its clear sap can make a person's skin ultra-sensitive to sunlight causing painful blisters.

The plant grows to 2.5-4 metres (8-14 ft.) in height with 1 m (3 ft.) leaves and an umbrella-shaped lacy flower, 30 cm (1 ft) in width.

"Property owners are required to remove and destroy all nuisance and noxious weeds found on their property, and we ask for their co-operation in controlling this invasive weed," he said.

The best time to remove the plant is in late April and early May when it is still relatively small— less than 30 cm (1 ft), and is easily dug up and more susceptible to herbicides.

He warned that protective clothing and eyewear must be worn when dealing with this plant.

Originally an Eurasian plant, giant hogweed was brought to Canada by greenhouse and nursery operations, which saw it as a dramatic addition to gardens. But, a member of the carrot family, it spreads easily, crowding out native species.

The Town is aware of several areas in Halton Hills where the plant is growing, such as on Third Line in the Scotch Block area, 15 Sideroad near Fourth Line, and 22 Sideroad near Dublin Line. Hogweed prefers moist soil found along roadsides, streams and rivers.

The Scotch Block patch— which is 40-50 years old— was the site of an ongoing study by Conservation Halton, University of Guelph and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) last year. The

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The Halton District School Board values input from parents, guardians and members of the public concerning the development of the 2011-12 budget.

Until Friday, May 27, 2011 input can be provided online through the Halton District School Board website at www.hdsb.ca

Follow the link from the home page. Also posted on-line are additional resources regarding education finance, recent budget presentations to trustees and an overview of the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) funding from the Ministry of Education.



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