

# Nuisance or noxious? Giant Hogweed is a growing problem locally

From blisters to blindness to potentially fatal breathing problems with children, Giant Hogweed is being blamed for a long list of health issues as officials attempt to educate the public about eradicating the plant, often described as "Queen Anne's Lace on steroids."

In recent months, there has been a spate of calls to local officials in Halton and Wellington County about sightings of the plant which can grow 10 to 12 feet high, with leaves and flowers over four feet across.

While in Ontario the plant is listed as a nuisance weed, several municipalities, including Halton Hills, want it added to the province's noxious weed

list, which would allow weed inspectors to remove it from private property, if the property owner refused to do so.

As a nuisance weed under the Halton Hills Community Standards Bylaw, landowners are required to destroy it and remove it. It is the potential for physical injury associated with Giant Hogweed that most concerns John Benham, a Wellington County weed inspector who cautions people about attempting to remove and destroy the plants on their own.

"I've seen all kinds of people tried to remove it with bad blisters all over their arms and legs. The main thing is to get the seed head off – but

you have to wear a protective suit and goggles because if you get the sap in your eye, you could lose it," Benham said on Friday, adding there are "incredible plantations of it (Giant Hogweed) throughout Halton. Plants in the Scotch Block area of Halton Hills, on the Third Line at Five Side Road, are being monitored by the Town, in conjunction with the University of Guelph.

Benham said some people are reluctant to remove Giant Hogweed because it is a beautiful plant, but once someone has been told that it is a nuisance weed, they could, "in this litigious society" face a lawsuit if someone was injured by contact with it.

Benham said municipal officials have a huge



**NUISANCE WEED:** This Giant Hogweed, growing in the back yard of a Victoria Avenue residence, is listed as a Nuisance Weed and under the Town's Property Standards Bylaw must be removed by the property owner. The weed must be handled carefully as contact with the sap can cause blisters and breathing problems. – Frances Niblock photo

battle to get rid of Giant Hogweed because the seeds can last for up to seven years in the ground and it comes up all year round. He said the best

way to destroy it is to hire a registered pesticide contractor.

One Acton homeowner with several huge Giant Hogweed plants in her

back yard downplayed Benham's safety concerns saying she had pulled several of the plants down by hand and never experienced any problems.

## Advertorial

### COLONICS now available at the Breast Health Clinic

*Natural Medicine Wellness consultant, Donovan Kerr, Ph.D., C.N.M. is a Certified Nutritional Microscopist; is certified in Colonic Irrigation and has over 21 years experience*

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fication because it enhances the elimination of toxins from the bloodstream.

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The Breast Health Clinic is owned and operated by Dr. Cynthia Simmons, HD. She is Homeopathic Doctor, a certified Thermographic Technician offering Breast Thermography and a Healthy Breast Educator, trained by Sat Dharam Kaur, ND, author of the well-known book "The Complete Natural Medicine Guide to Breast Cancer" which is a practical manual for the understanding, prevention & care of Breast Cancer. Dr. Simmons offers the "Healthy Breast Program", which is a naturopathic protocol for preventing breast cancer and treating women with the disease, used in combination with allopathic diagnosis and treatment options.

For Information contact:

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## New Chamber Tourism Passport

Summer has finally arrived, bringing warm temperatures and many tourists with it. This year, Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce, the Halton Hills Cultural Roundtable, and the Town of Halton Hills have undertaken a new project. For the first time, Halton Hills is launching its very own Family Tourism Passport. The idea of a family passport has been around for many years, and has proven to be a great way to attract visitors to a community.

The 2010 Halton Hills Family Passport covers ten different locations and events taking place in different locations throughout Halton Hills. Whether it is spending the day in Glen Williams, enjoying the rides at the Georgetown Fall Fair, or dining on delicious apples at Andrew's Scenic Acres, there is something that will appeal to everyone. This passport does not just focus

on one area; instead, it tries to incorporate all of the different aspects of Halton Hills. Visitors will soon come to realize that Halton Hills has so much to offer that it is impossible to see it all in one visit.

The 2010 Halton Hills Family Passport is designed to encourage families to visit our community throughout the year. Every time they visit one of the locations listed inside the passport visitors will receive a stamp. Once they have collected at least five stamps from different locations, they become eligible to enter the Grand Prize draw for a \$250 gift card to EB Games! All entries are to be mailed to Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce by November 15, 2010. The Grand Prize draw will take place on November 30.

For more information about the passport, or to get a supply to distribute, contact Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce. We're located at 328 Guelph Street, Georgetown and are open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call the Chamber at 905-877-7119 or e-mail tourism@haltonhillschamber.on.ca. Inquires can also be made at the Web site: www.haltonhillschamber.on.ca. Also, be sure to be on the lookout for booths handing out the Tourism Passports at future events in Halton Hills.

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