



Giant hogweed can be harmful to both humans and other plant life, warns Conservation Halton. File photo by Graham Paine / Metroland West Media Group

Conservation Halton reminds residents about dangers of giant hogweed

Conservation Halton (CH) is reminding area residents about a particularly harmful plant that may be lurking on their properties — giant hogweed.

The invasive species — which has been found in numerous areas throughout Halton in recent years — has an adverse effect on many other plants.

More concerning, it's a public health hazard, with the production of a noxious sap serving to sensitize the skin to ultraviolet light. Known as photosensitivity, this can result in severe and painful burning and blistering. With that in mind, CH urges area homeowners to keep an eye out for giant hogweed — which is distinctive by its enormous size, reaching heights of 2.5 m to 4 m and with leaves up to 1 m in breadth — and practice caution when dealing with it.

Homeowners with large infestations are encouraged to seek expert assistance with its removal. Those wishing to deal with small cases of the species should wear proper protective clothing to avoid skin contact with the sap.

For small patches, residents must be sure to dig up the entire root and check the area again two weeks later for any re-growth.

For those who undertook giant hogweed removal late last year, there will likely be seedlings sprouting up this spring.

Free advice about giant hogweed can be obtained by contacting Brenda Van Ryswuk with CH at (905) 336-1158, ext. 2282, or brendav@hrca.on.ca.

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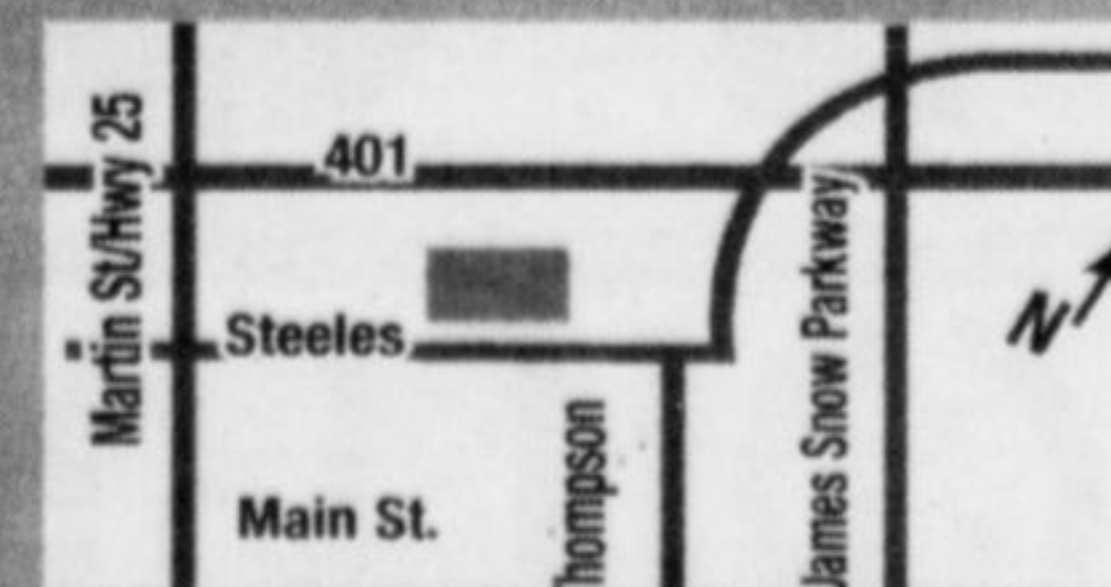
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