

May 25, 2010

It is that time of year again. Giant hogweed plants are growing bigger and people are starting to call the DEC for information and to report locations of the giant hogweed plants. I have provided information below about our hotline, statewide control project, what to tell the public when they call and how you can help.



Giant Hogweed Hotline:

All giant hogweed calls should be routed to the NYSDEC Giant Hogweed Hotline **(845)256-3111**. The hotline is a place for people to report new sites, ask questions about the plant and how to control it, and connect with our statewide control project. The hotline calls will be answered by Naja Kraus & Sarah Sterner. Ag & Markets is no longer running the giant hogweed hotline so please **DO NOT** send callers to the old hotline number.

Hotline callers will be asked to provide photos of the plants and information about the reported site. Confirmed sites (verified with photos) will be entered into our database and we will help the property owner learn to control the plants themselves or have our field crews control it for them if time allows.

Callers should be prepared to give directions to the site and have a rough idea of the number of plants/size of infestation. Also very helpful are GPS coordinates.

Photos are needed for confirmation before a site can be added into our database. Do not touch the plants while taking photos! High resolution digital photos should be emailed to sasterne@dec.gw.state.ny.us.

The best pictures to take are:

1. one picture of the whole plant- so we can see how tall it is
2. pictures of the basal (bottom) leaves
3. close-up of the stem where the leaf stalk connects
4. flower head (include one from the bottom/side so the number of flower rays/stalks can be roughly counted, if only dead flower head from last year is available that is OK too)
5. close-up of seed if available



Giant Hogweed Control Project:

This is NYSDEC Forest Health & Protection's third year of controlling giant hogweed plants in New York State. This year we have 5 giant hogweed crews (12 people) who will be visiting most of the 648 known giant hogweed sites. Sites with less than 400 plants will be controlled with a manual root-cutting method; sites with more than 400 plants will be controlled with herbicide. Funding for 2010 & 2011 is provided by federal stimulus funds. 2010 GH crews are located at the following DEC offices: Avon, Allegany, Bath, Cortland & Reinstein Woods. All new sites should be reported to the GH Hotline, **NOT** directly to the crews. Sites confirmed through the hotline will be sent out to the crews and controlled this year if time allows.



In 2008, root-cutting control occurred at 130 sites with a total of 10,558 plants removed. In 2009, root-cutting control occurred at 195 sites with a total of 13,354 plants removed. Herbicide control occurred at 146 sites with a total of 871,267 plants sprayed. We are looking forward to another great season this year!

What to tell the public when they contact you:

1. Encourage them to report a suspected giant hogweed plant/infestation by calling DEC Giant Hogweed Hotline (845)256-3111.
2. **Send them to our DEC giant hogweed web page** (search: giant hogweed) where they can find information about the plant, how to identify it, how to control it, look at a map of NY state sites, and more. <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/39809.html>
3. Be aware that many of the calls are actually for a “look-alike” plant- cow parsnip, angelica, wild parsnip, poison hemlock, elderberry, queen-anne’s lace or others. Let them know that cow parsnip & wild parsnip can also cause burns when the sap contacts skin that is later exposed to sun. If you feel sufficiently comfortable with plant identification, ask questions about the size, shape and color of the plant to weed out calls about other plants.
4. If you want to provide them with giant hogweed information, there are PDFs of many giant hogweed documents available on the website.



How you can help:

1. Verify new sites for us. There are some people who are unable to send photos when reporting a new site so if you are able to help us ground truth the suspected GH sites in your region, please let me know which towns or counties you can cover and we will send you the forms needed and locations of sites for you to verify for us. You will need to email us digital photos of the plants.
2. Report new giant hogweed sites that you find to us. We can provide you with a form to fill out and email to us or you can call the hotline.
 - a. Information needed: county, township, address of GH location (GPS coordinates a plus), directions to plants, property owner name and contact information (phone/address), estimated # of GH plants.
3. For people or agencies already doing or planning GH control, please contact me and let me know what sites you are controlling. I would like to connect you with the GH crew doing work in your area so we can make sure we are not duplicating efforts.
4. For agencies interested in collaborating with us, please send me the name, phone & email of a contact person, what areas (e.g. towns, counties) you cover, and how you envision your agency can help with this project (e.g. site verification, outreach, control).

Thanks in advance for all of your help and cooperation.

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