

Heracleum mantegazzianum (Giant hogweed)

Giant hogweed is a tall (up to 15-20 feet in height), herbaceous, biennial plant that invades disturbed areas across both the Northeast and Pacific Northwestern United States. The large stem is hollow and usually blotched with purple. The leaves are deeply lobed, sharply pointed and up to 5 feet in width. The white flowers are on a large umbrella-shaped head that can be up to 2 ½ feet in diameter. Giant hogweed can invade a variety of habitats but prefers moist disturbed soils such as riverbanks, ditches and railroad right-of-ways. It is native to Europe and Asia. Giant hogweed was first introduced into the United States in 1917 for ornamental purposes. **It is designated as a federal noxious weed because the sap it produces can cause skin sensitivity to UV radiation, referred to as phytophotodermatitis, leading to blistering and severe burns. Contact with the eyes can cause temporary or permanent blindness.**



Photograph information: Inflorescence taken by Terry English, USDA APHIS PPQ and blister taken from the APHIS Archives. Photos reproduced from www.invasive.org.

Other resources and links to more pictures

<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/profiles/hogweed.shtml>

http://www.mass.gov/agr/pestalet/giant_hogweed.htm

<http://plants.usda.gov>

***Ailanthus altissima* (Tree of Heaven, Chinese Sumac, Stink Tree)**

Tree of Heaven is a fast-growing tree that can reach up to 100 ft. It is adaptable to poor and rich soils, steep or shallow slopes, urban areas, open fields and woodlands, and closed canopy forests . The bark is gray and smooth with the younger twigs often covered in a light brown to reddish brown pubescence. The leaves are pinnately compound to 3 feet in length with 11-41 leaflets, each having a lobe at the base. The yellowish-green flowers grow in large terminal clusters to 20 inches long. Male and female flower on separate trees. Tree of Heaven was introduced to the United States from Europe in 1784 as an ornamental. It is originally from Eastern China.



Photo credit: <http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/esadoes/ailaalti.html>



Photo credit: Paul Wray, Iowa State University, www.forestryimages.org

The sap from the Tree of Heaven can be extremely dangerous as shown in an article that appeared in “The Annals of Internal Medicine” in July 2005. A PDF of this case study can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

And, an excerpt from United Kingdom Botanical Dermatology Database shows documentation of the adverse affects of this plant throughout time (see below for link), as well as its beneficial qualities.

<http://bodd.cf.ac.uk/BotDermFolder/BotDermS/SIMA.html>

Other resources and links to more pictures:

<http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/esadocs/ailaalti.html>

www.invasive.org

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/aial1.htm>

<http://plants.usda.gov>

<http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/a/ailalt/ailalt1.html>