

Media Release

July 27, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GIANT HOGWEED IDENTIFIED IN WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE, ON – Town Staff has identified the growth of Giant Hogweed in some areas within the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. It is important to take caution if you come across this plant as contact can pose serious health threats.

Giant Hogweed is an invasive plant species that grows up to 5 meters tall. The stems of the plant are marked with reddish-purple spots with small, stiff hairs sticking out of it. Its leaves are large and deeply cut with sharp edges, reaching around one meter in length. The plant is most commonly identified by its white, umbrella-shaped flowers.

If the stem, leaves or plant hairs break, they produce a clear, toxic sap. If contacted, the sap can cause severe inflammation of the skin. Contaminated skin exposed to ultraviolet rays may have reactions such as burns, blistering, painful sores and scars. If sap has contact with eyes, there is a risk of temporary or permanent blindness.

“Do not try removing this plant on your own,” says Dave Chatwell, Municipal By-law Enforcement Officer for the Town. “If you spot Giant Hogweed on your property, we highly recommend you advise the Town and contact a local lawncare and vegetation company so that they can remove and dispose of the plant safely.”

Giant Hogweed is typically found along roadsides, ditches and streams. It invades fields and native habitats such as open woodlands.

Town staff have been monitoring the growth of this plant on Town property. If you happen to see Giant Hogweed on any Town property, we urge you to contact our customer service department at 905-640-1900 so staff can remove it immediately.

For more information on Giant Hogweed, visit invadingspecies.com.

About the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is one of the jewels of the GTA, located just north of Toronto on Highway 404. We are a community rich in heritage and character and we are committed to offering our residents and businesses 'Country Close to the City'.

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