

Tool Box Talk 187 – Giant Hogweed

Are you aware of a substance that can:

- Massively reduce your skins protection from the sun leaving you prone to severe sunburn.
- Cause severe inflammation
- Painful blisters
- Long term sunlight sensitivity
- Scars lasting up to 6 years; and
- Blindness in extreme cases

What is GIANT HOGWEED and how do I identify it?

- Giant hogweed plants grow to between 10 and 20 ft. tall; have broad leaves at the base, thick stems, and white flowers sprouting from the top.
- The distinguishing feature of Hogweed is the reddish stem.
- Umbrella shaped flower
- Most likely to be found by water courses

How to protect yourself:

- Do not touch bare skin with the plant or with sap covered gloves
- Protect your skin from the sun/UV light by wearing long sleeves, safety gloves.
- Apply sunscreen before working near hogweed
- Wash clothing that has been in contact with hogweed before reusing
- Wash equipment with water immediately after use
- Do not use a 'weed whacker' as sap may splatter

What to do if you are exposed:

- Wash the affected area with soap and COLD water as soon as possible
- Keep exposed area out of the sunlight for at least 48 hours
- If a reaction occurs seek medical advice
- If sap gets in your eyes rinse with water and wear sunglasses

