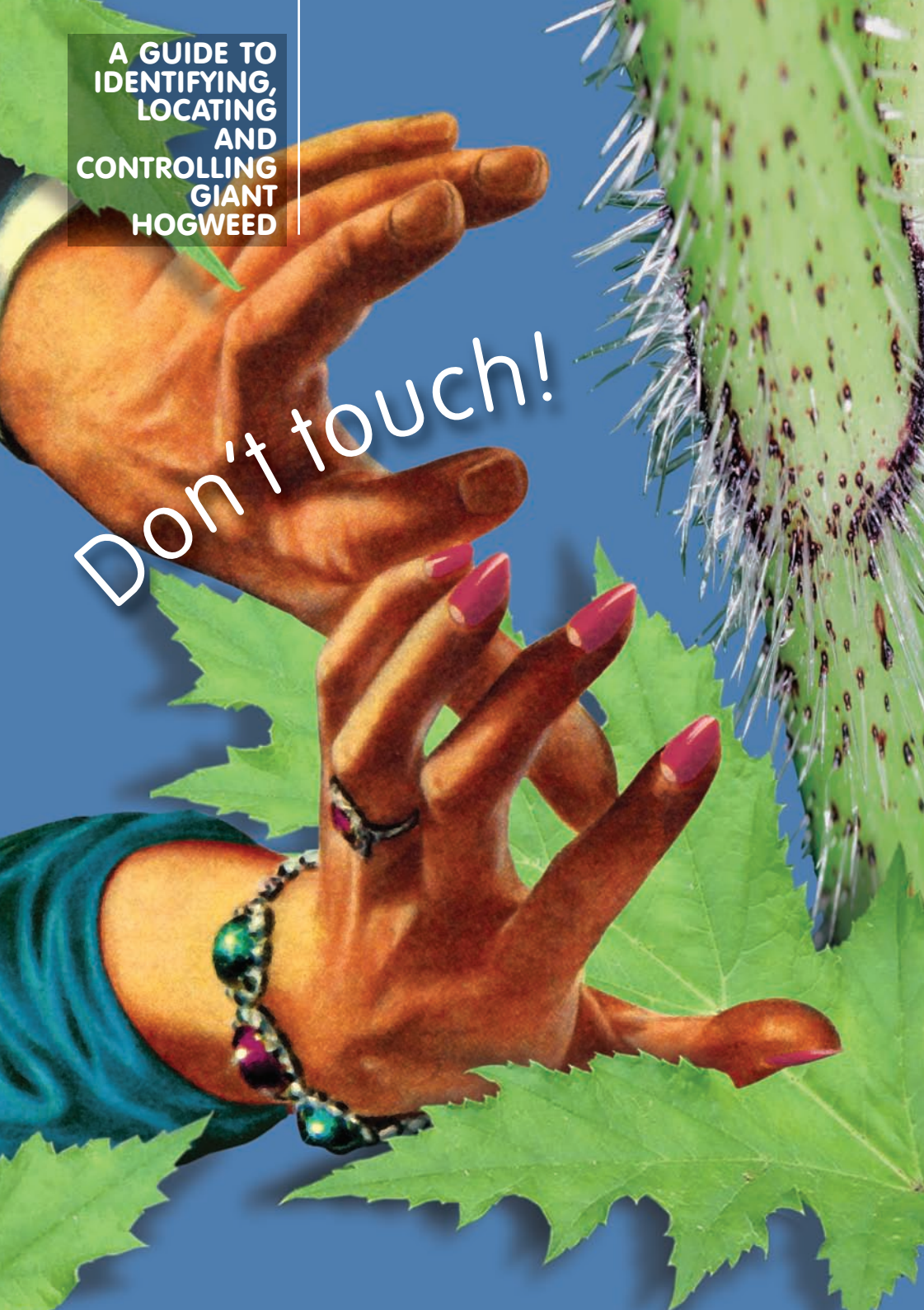


A GUIDE TO
IDENTIFYING,
LOCATING
AND
CONTROLLING
GIANT
HOGWEED

Don't touch!



GIANT HOGWEED

Heracleum Mantegezianum

NATIVE RANGE

Caucasus Mountains – Southern Russia and Georgia

CURRENT HABITAT

Widespread throughout the region particularly common on riverbanks

SPECIES DESCRIPTION

Large biennial plant that may take up to four years to flower. First introduced to the UK in the late nineteenth century as an ornamental plant. Due to the plants ability to produce vast amounts of seed it has now spread throughout the country resulting in a loss of biodiversity where established due to the suppressing of native vegetation.



HAZARD TO HEALTH



Contact with any part of this plant must be avoided as even minute amounts of sap will result in severe blistering. The stems and leaves are both covered in small hairs and even the slightest contact with these will result in skin irritation. Blistering symptoms will occur between 12 and 48 hours after exposure, further irritation could occur when skin is exposed to sunlight.

Protective clothing must be worn when coming into contact with this plant.

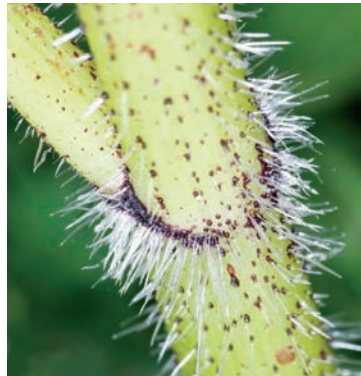
IDENTIFICATION FEATURES

STEMS

Hollow up to 5m long with green, red or purple blotches with fine sharp bristles up to 100mm in diameter.

LEAVES

Dark green in rosette with a jagged or serrated appearance, fine bristles on underside up to 2m across and 1.5m long.



FLOWERS

Produced in mid summer, white in colour, several hundred together in large umbrella like flower heads, up to 850mm across.



SEEDS

Each plant is capable of producing up to 80,000 seeds approx 10mm x 7mm in size. These are dispersed easily by water or wind and may remain viable for up to 15 years.

CONTROLS

The aim of all forms of control is to prevent the plant flowering and setting seed.

MECHANICAL CONTROL

Cutting stems with a sharp hook or scythe to prevent flowering will aid control, strimming should be avoided to prevent contamination with sap.

Plants at biennial stage can be removed with a fork or spade provided care is taken not to come into contact with the sap.

CHEMICAL CONTROL

Spraying is very effective, plants can be treated with Glyphosate once active growth has resumed usually from March onwards. Due to the large numbers of viable seed, annual treatment and monitoring will be necessary for a number of years to prevent reinfestation.

If herbicides are to be used on or near a watercourse then prior approval will need to be sought from the **Environment Agency**.

LEGISLATION

It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to plant or cause to grow wild any plant listed in schedule nine part two of the Act. Giant Hogweed is included in this list.