



Giant hogweed

(*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)

Managing giant hogweed in the Pays d'Honfleur intermunicipal association

Être & Boulot association

- The association for professional and social insertion was founded on 6 November 2002 and subsequently approved and certified by the Work ministry (DIRECCTE) and the Calvados departmental council.
- The association is active in the territory of the Pays d'Honfleur intermunicipal association (CCPH).
- The main missions of the Environment and littoral team are to:
 - improve living conditions by flowering and improving urban areas;
 - put natural areas to use through tourism and recreational activities;
 - protect the environment and the biodiversity of protected zones (ZNIEFF, Natura 2000, etc.);
 - manage areas colonised by giant hogweed in the CCPH area in a partnership with the National botanical conservatory in Brest and the Basse-Normandie nature conservatory.
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Intervention site

- In the framework of the management project for giant hogweed, the Être & Boulot association works on colonised sites in the CCPH area.
- In 2012, the association worked on 20 sites spread over the 13 towns of the CCPH. Certain sites were identified by individuals that contacted the association following efforts to inform on the situation by CCPH and the association.

Disturbances and issues involved

- In the Basse-Normandie region, only two areas would seem to be colonised by giant hogweed. The largest is around Honfleur, notably in the city park. The species has also invaded several sectors of the port area.
- An isolated colony in the Grand-Hazé marshes in the Orne department is also known to exist.
- The species provokes a number of known impacts observed on the intervention site.



1. 2. 3. 4. Intervention sites from 2007 to 2011 in four sectors of CCPH.
 BD Ortho - IGN Paris 2006. Data: Être & Boulot / CFEN.
 Production: Florence Thinzilal, September 2011

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■ Impacts on biodiversity

- The species is highly competitive (rapid growth and large size) with respect to most native species in the areas colonised by giant hogweed.

■ Impacts on human health

- Giant hogweed provokes strong allergic reactions (dermatosis) following direct contact with the skin. This is due to the presence of furanocoumarin in all parts of the plant, a substance that burns the skin.

Interventions

■ Since 2007, in a partnership with the National botanical conservatory in Brest, the Être & Boulot association has worked to manage giant hogweed. The objective is to reduce the size of the flower heads and to limit flowering by slowing regrowth.

■ To that end, two techniques were used, crown cutting and cutting the flower stem. Both methods were used on all the colonised sites and repeated six times on average on each site, from mid-April to mid-September.

■ Manual and mechanical cutting

■ A billhook was used for manual cutting and a rotary cutter on the back of a tractor for mechanical cutting.

■ This technique is the first used on a site to let the plant regrow.

■ Crown cutting

■ The crown of leaves is cut off from the roots at ground level using a spade, in order to weaken the roots and to slow regrowth.

■ This technique is used for maintenance work

■ Fate of the plant waste

■ The plant matter was initially deposited on site to limit regrowth by blocking light.

■ The flower heads were transported to a ditch and covered with quicklime (once per year).

■ Precautions taken

■ During the work, the personnel wore disposable boilersuits, gloves and a respiratory assistance device.

■ After the work:

- the boilersuits were put in garbage bags and thrown away;
- the other equipment (boots, gloves) were rinsed with water.

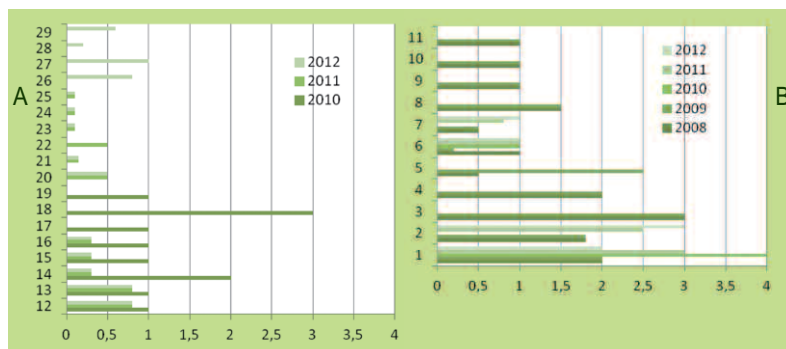
Results and assessment

■ Results

■ The results include a reduction in the number of plants and in their height, and a weakening of the roots due to the crown cutting combined with systematic cutting of the plants.

■ Giant hogweed disappeared from two sites (no. 19 and 11) following the work in 2010.

■ Many new sites have been sparsely colonised since 2010.



A. Density of plants per square metre per year on sites discovered in 2010.

B. Density of plants per square metre per year on sites discovered in 2008



5. Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

6. Fully equipped personnel.

7. Plant matter left on site.

8. Mechanical cutting using a rotary cutter.

■ Assessment

■ Since 2009, the preferred method has been crown cutting combined with systematic cutting of the plants (manual and mechanical cutting) given its effectiveness in slowing plant growth.

In the beginning, seven techniques were to be used from 2007 to 2009:

tarping, manual and mechanical cutting, chemical treatments, soil removal and replanting, crown cutting and grazing. Tarping and soil removal with replanting were never implemented. The grazing trial was not pursued on the colonised plot (maize was planted by the farmer).

■ Each year, new sites colonised by giant hogweed were found in the CCPH area and beyond.

■ The difficulties encountered included:

- problems organising the work due to the many stakeholders involved (private land owners) and land use (work under way on some sites);
- the lack of a “technical manger” to provide assistance in the event of problems during the work;
- the large (and increasing) number of man-hours required each year.

Man-hours worked each year.

Year	Time spent (hours)
2008	700
2009	960
2010	1 600
2011	2 400
2012	1 810

■ Outlook

■ Pursue the use of the crown cutting technique and develop new techniques such as planting native species to compete with the giant hogweed.

■ Expand the technical assistance for project management provided by the regional environmental directorate and the Basse-Normandie nature conservatory.

■ Information on the project

■ An informational brochure on giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) was published by the CCPH.

■ A fact sheet on the species and the work done was distributed by the Être & Boulot association to its members and stakeholders, and to visitors to trade shows and other events in which it participates.

■ Articles on the work carried out were published in the local press (Ouest-France and Pays d’Auge newspapers, the annual bulletin of the CCPH and the bulletin of the Basse-Normandie regional council).

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9. Site colonised by giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) in 2009.

10. The same site in 2011 prior to the annual work.

11. The same site in 2011 after the annual work.

For more information

- Être & Boulot internet site: <http://etreetboulot.org/>
- Two slide shows on the work done by the Être & Boulot association, 2010, 2011.
- CCPH. 2012. Raw data on the programme against giant hogweed.

