

Hogweed

Heracleum sphondylium

Plants · In flower Jun-Sep



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A robust biennial or perennial with large, coarse, lobed leaves and broad flat umbels of white — sometimes pinkish — flowers on thick, ridged, bristly hollow stems. Hogweed flowers after cow parsley and is common on verges, rough grassland, hedge banks and waste ground throughout the Dumfries area.

BEHAVIOUR

The flower heads are among the most productive insect tables in the countryside, covered through summer with soldier beetles, hoverflies, flies and small wasps. The sap contains furanocoumarins that sensitise skin to sunlight and can cause blistering — much less severely than giant hogweed, but strimmer operators are regularly burned by it, and it is worth respecting.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Carrots (Apiaceae)
HEIGHT	50–200 cm
STATUS	Native; abundant — sap can blister skin in sunlight

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