

WEST TIPPERARY GIANT HOGWEED CONTROL PROGRAMME

The Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) through its Farming for Water EIP project, and in partnership with Tipperary County Council, the local community and other stakeholders have produced an innovative action plan to control the spread of, and eradicate, a giant hogweed infestation in West Tipperary and also to improve water quality in the area. These severe hogweed infestations occur along sections of the Toem, Cappawhite and Cahernahaille tributaries of the upper Mulkear/Dead River catchment in the Cappawhite area and can have a serious impact on water quality, ecology and biodiversity. Giant hogweed - *Heracleum mantegazzianum* - is a non-native invasive hazardous plant, which can cause serious skin burns and other health issues. Children are particularly at risk. Giant hogweed should not, however, be confused with regular hogweed which is evident in ditches along many local roadways.

SPECIES PROFILE

Habitat: Terrestrial. Most common on river banks.

Distribution in Ireland: Widespread and common in Northern Ireland, locally abundant in the rest of Ireland.

Status: Established.

Family name: Apiaceae (Umbelliferae).

Reproduction: By seed that can remain viable up to 15 years after initial dispersal. Seeds spread by wind, water, animal and human influence.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Height: The size of giant hogweed makes it easy to identify, as it can grow up to 5-6m in height.

Stem: The main stem is large, usually with purple blotches, hollow and can have hairy bristles and be 5-10cm in diameter.

Flowers: White or rarely pink, flowering from June to August. There can be up to 50,000 (1.5 cm) seeds per plant.

Leaves: Serrated and sharply divided leaves; can grow to 3m in length and 1.5m wide.

THREATS

Giant hogweed poses a threat to human health due to production of a hazardous sap that can cause severe burns and scarring by sensitising the skin to light (UV radiation). Its large surface area means it shades out native species and its high volume of seed production means it easily propagates. The species can also increase soil erosion along river banks.

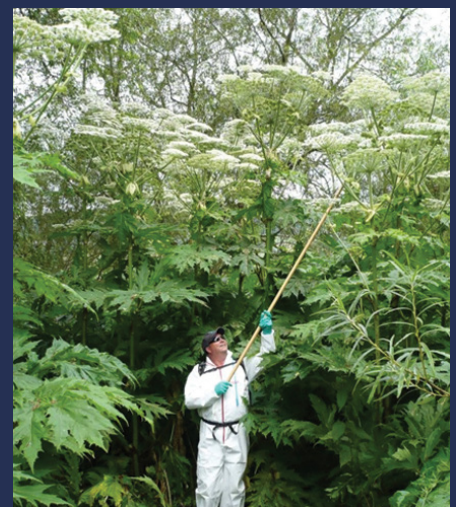
SEASONAL CHANGE

Spring: Expanded leaves and the plant is over 15cm in height.

Summer: Large flowering head can be seen.

Autumn: Green areas of the stem lose their colour and turn yellowish-brown. Flowers are replaced by seeds.

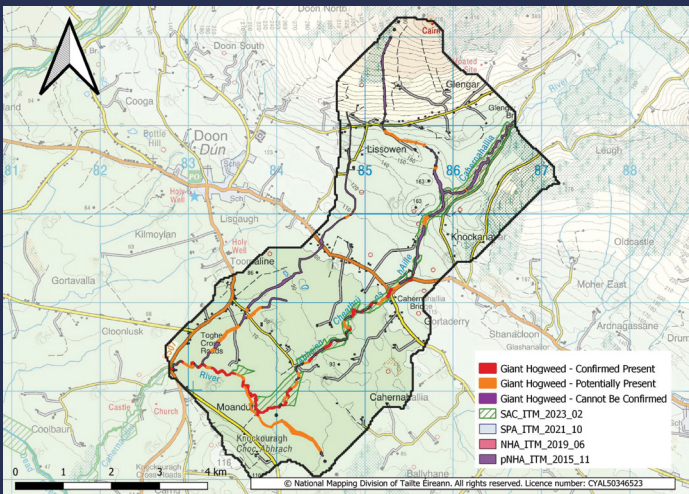
Winter: Dies back in winter leaving river banks vulnerable to erosion.



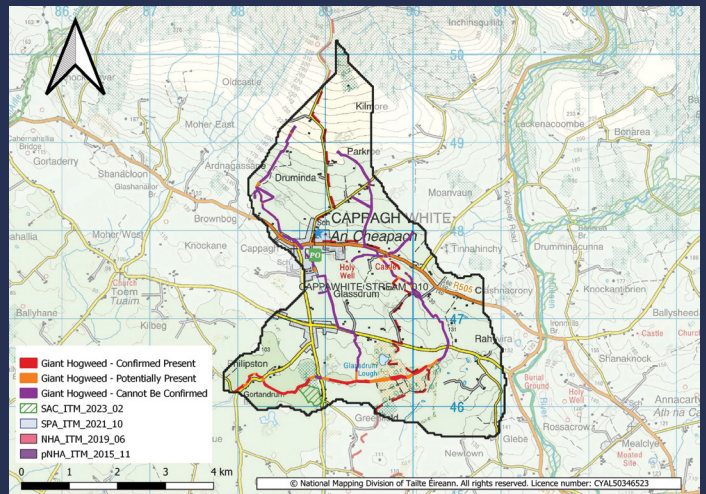
Images: National Biodiversity Data Centre

WHAT AREAS ARE AFFECTED?

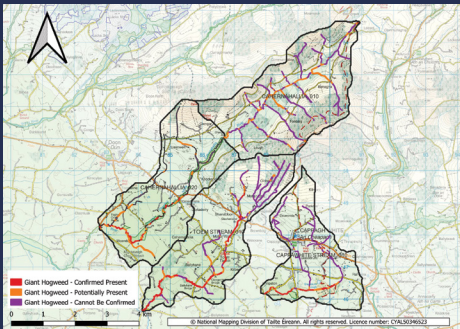
The maps below outline the affected areas along the Toem, Cappawhite and Cahernahaille tributaries of the upper Mulkear/Dead River catchment in the greater Cappawhite area.



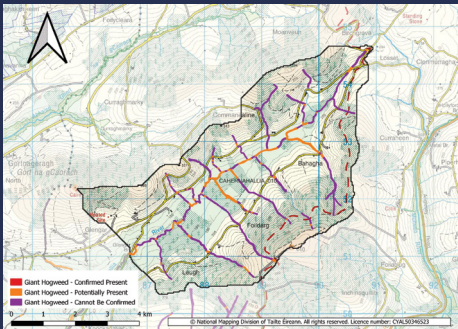
Cahernahalla



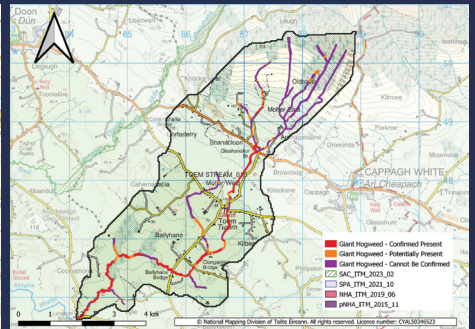
Cappawhite



Cahernahalla



Cahernahalla



Toem Stream

ABOUT THE FARMING FOR WATER EIP

The Farming for Water EIP, which has its headquarters at Rossmore Neighbourhood Centre in Tipperary Town, is a €60 million project running until the end of 2027. Its core aim is to support farmers in placing “the right measures in the right place” by taking a targeted approach to manage risk to water quality from their farms. It is guided by the catchment science information from LAWPRO and implemented by the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme (ASSAP) programme. The Farming for Water EIP project takes a multiple benefits approach focusing on water quality but also addressing biodiversity and climate issues. The work will also help to create a broader understanding of issues affecting water quality in the catchment.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

The Giant Hogweed eradication programme is one of the bespoke measures under LAWPRO’s Farming for Water European Innovative Partnership (EIP). In order to have this invasive species treated and eradicated, landowners must sign up for the Farming for Water project through their farm advisors.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Speak to your advisor today or check out the Farming for Water website www.farmingforwater.ie for further information. Phone our office on **062 33063** - Office hours 9:00am - 4:30pm.



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