**Cow Parsnip or Giant Hogweed?**

Both plants have hollow stems, and white flowers in an umbel. Keep in mind that Giant Hogweed can take **up to two years** to reach the flowering stage.

**Compare these key characteristics:**

**Height of Plant**
Cow Parsnip grows 3 to 6 feet (up to 2m) tall. Giant Hogweed can grow 2 to 5m tall, but prefers moist, shady areas and may not grow as tall in the North Okanagan.

**Size of Flower Cluster**
Measured edge to edge, Cow Parsnip flower clusters are no larger than 1 foot (30cm) across. Mature Giant Hogweed flower clusters can be up to 1 meter (3 feet) wide.

**Cow Parsnip**

**Rays on Umbel**
Count the number of rays, or individual flower stalks, on the umbel.
- **15 to 30:** Cow Parsnip
- **50 to 150:** Giant Hogweed

**Lobed Leaves**
Giant Hogweed’s compound, lobed leaves (single leaves with lobes that look like a hand and fingers) are deeply incised and up to 5 feet wide.

Cow Parsnip leaves are also lobed but less deeply incised, and up to 2 to 2.5 feet wide.

**Stem**
Take a closer look at the stem. Is it thicker than two inches? Does it have fine hairs or stiff white bristles? Purple spots or blotches? Although the stem of Cow Parsnip may be purplish, it is mostly green, with no blotching or spots.

- **Mostly green, no blotches, fine hairs, 1”-2” diameter:**
  - Cow Parsnip
- **Purple blotches or spots, stiff bristles, 1”-3” diameter:**
  - Giant Hogweed

**Giant Hogweed**

**What is an umbel?**
An umbel is a flat-topped or rounded flower cluster in which individual flower stalks, or ‘rays’, arise from about the same point.

**More plants with hollow stems & umbels:**
- **Angelica** - look for globe-like, compound umbels.
- **Wild Carrot / Queen Anne’s Lace** - with compound umbels, flower clusters 2”-5” across.
- **Water Hemlock** - TOXIC! has flower clusters 2”-4” wide.
- **Wild Chervil** - fern-like leaves.
- **Water Parsnip** - alternate leaves are arranged in pairs.

**Not sure? E-mail a photo!**
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**WEAR PERSONAL PROTECTION - Giant Hogweed & Cow Parsnip are phototoxic!**