

# The Giant Hogweed as a rare cause of chemical burns: A Case Series

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The Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) is

- a rare cause for **chemical burns** in humans and animals
- acquiring growing recognition in mainstream media as a **relevant public health concern**.

Injuries attributed to this plant range from **innocuous superficial irritation to full-thickness chemical burns**.

## Description:

We present a case series of 2 patients requiring admission to the Royal Group Hospitals for **management of mixed thickness hogweed burns**.

Injuries were sustained by two separate infestations of giant hogweed in the Western Trust Area.

Both patients responded to observation and conservative measures, namely **effective analgesia, UV light protection, topical hydrocortisone, and dressings**.

## Discussion:

- ❖ Cutaneous burns induced by giant hogweed are caused by **contact with its photoactive sap containing plant furocoumarins**. On exposure to sunlight, the sap initiates a **damaging process** known as **phytophotodermatitis (PPD)**.
- ❖ This process can be managed effectively with topical steroids; however, prolonged contact and subsequent sun exposure may lead to more severe skin damage.
- ❖ In extremely rare instances, damage may progress to full skin thickness burns warranting operative intervention.



Picture 1: Superficial partial thickness burn of patient A's left leg



Picture 2: Mixed depth partial thickness burn of patient B's legs