

In this Issue

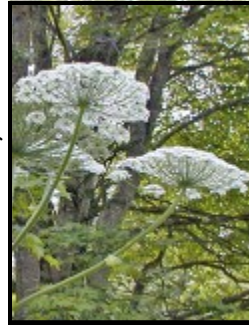
Giant Hogweed

FireSmart Landscape

Today At Coastal

## Giant Hogweed

Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) was first believed to have been brought to Canada via Britain from Asia as an ornamental plant. It is easily identified by its height, cluster of white flowers and purple splotching on its stem. While many botanists are fascinated by its grandeur, they are also quick to point out its dangers.



Simply touching the plant or standing downwind from it may have serious and long term consequences including burning, blistering or scarring of skin and even blindness. The sap is photosensitive so once it is exposed to sunlight; the sap reacts on the skin or in eyes. It has been known to cause temporary blindness and, in some extreme cases, permanent blindness when not treated immediately.



have been exposed, wash the affected area with soap and water. If burning and blistering become visible, or your vision becomes impaired in any way, you should go see your physician.

Giant Hogweed is an extremely serious issue for fire crews, as the areas populated by this plant are areas that fire crews often work in. It flourishes in wet, moist areas along roadside ditches, stream banks, tree lines and open wooded areas.

We are asking for the assistance of the public with the eradication of this invasive plant. What can you do to help? Contact the Coastal Invasive Plant Committee where you can get further information or 'Report-a-Weed'.

Symptoms will appear within 24 to 48 hours of being exposed. As soon as you are aware you

More information at  
[www.coastalinvasiveplants.com](http://www.coastalinvasiveplants.com).

## Scotch Broom

Scotch Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) is often admired due to its bright yellow flowers. Broom was originally introduced as a landscape ornamental, but has since escaped cultivation and aggressively invaded many natural areas.

Scotch Broom's dense stems make regeneration of most native species difficult. Dense growth of



Scotch Broom may increase the spread of surface fires by providing a continuous area of fuel. As the plant grows, the inner stems die back, accumulating dead fuel, high oil and

high resin and low moisture content of their leaves and branches increase its flammability.

Inspect your property and remove plants to reduce risk of fire. Replant the area with plants that are selected to maintain adequate defensible space around your home.

## Gorse

Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) is a spiny evergreen shrub with bright yellow, pea-like flowers, resembling Scotch Broom. And like Scotch Broom it outcompetes native vegetation, increases fire hazard and has the potential to impair regeneration of native plants.



Gorse is most commonly found on southern Vancouver Island, but also appears on some of the Gulf Islands and in Haida Gwaii.

Infestation of Gorse is believed to have played an important role in the disastrous Bandon Fires in Oregon in 1936 and continues to be a serious concern. As a

part of FireSmarting your home, remove any Gorse near your property.

'On that late summer day a forest fire burned several miles east of town, far enough away that the residents of Bandon were not particularly worried. A sudden shift in the wind, however, drove the flames swiftly westward. Ignited by the forest fire, the town's abundant gorse exploded into an inferno.'

The Oregon History Project, Sept. 1936

See detailed weather forecast page 2



## To Date in Coastal

### Fires to Date

Person Caused 43

Lighting Caused 0

Total Number of Fires 43

Hectares burnt 22

Number of Incidents Responded to 522

### Fire Danger Rating



High/Extreme Southern Vancouver Island

See detailed weather forecast—page 2

## FireSmart Landscape

One of the most important aspects of FireSmart is the preparation of the area surrounding your home. Managing the area around your home may reduce the risk of wildfire damage to your property. The FireSmart program has great tips on thinning and spacing vegetation and can be found at [www.bcwildfire.ca](http://www.bcwildfire.ca).



Any kind of vegetation is combustible; however, some plants are less flammable and are a safer alternative than others. For a list of fire resistant plants, trees and shrubs, go to <http://bcwildfire.ca/Prevention/Property/Landscape/fireresistantplants.htm>

Another great source of material on how to protect your property can be found through

the Insurance Bureau of Canada. Go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and type in FireSmart for an excellent short video on how to FireSmart your home. This video, produced in Jasper, AB, has practical tips and demonstrates key points about the safety of deciduous plants versus some coniferous varieties.

To further safeguard your property, you may want to consider locating Gorse and Scotch Broom in your neighbourhood and removing it, or contacting one of the various organizations in your region, such as Broom-busters in the Mid-Island on Vancouver Island.

## Weather

## Today At Coastal

There is no doubt that things are heating up here in Coastal and the worry is that residents and visitors have forgotten the lessons of past summers because of our unseasonably cooler temperatures to date.

Last weekend the Coastal Fire Centre had 81 incidents with the majority of these being abandoned campfires. With forecasters predicting a rise in temperatures over this weekend abandoned campfires can quickly escape resulting in a more serious situation.

As the Fire Danger Rating climbs, so too does the inevitability of wildfire but with the public's assistance the risks can be minimized. Please remember to put out your campfires and if you see a wildfire call:

1-800-663-5555 or  
\*5555 on your cell phone

**SYNOPSIS..** The weather pattern today has a weak westerly flow and a marine layer that formed overnight has invaded the west side of Vancouver Island including all the major lakes as well as the Lower Mainland and the Fraser Valley. Another more extensive band of onshore flow cloudiness completely covers the Mid-coast, Haida Gwaii and the northern third of Vancouver Island. The low cloudiness will gradually dissipate over the next few hours and with a slower start to the heating most areas will see lower afternoon highs than on Thursday. Saturday may not be much different with some patchy morning clouds followed by afternoon sun.

**OUTLOOK..** By Sunday a weak upper ridge brings slightly warmer afternoon highs and then Monday sees a thermally induced trough over the BC interior pull in much warmer air from the US interior and Coastal zones although directly in the thermal pattern see afternoon highs peak in the high 20s to low 30s range. The pattern fades a bit by Tuesday and temperatures cool somewhat but in any case the weather stays dry.

**LONG TERM TREND..** The dry spell comes to an end around Thursday or Friday next week with a more vigorous onshore flow generating a few western mountainside showers. A new upper ridge is likely to pop up by about the 13th or 14th and a new warm spell starts.