



Giant Hogweed Report for River Tyne 2023

We have reached the end of Year 5 of our River Tyne Giant Hogweed Eradication Programme which has once more been a very successful year in achieving our objective.

We were once again able to use the invaluable on-line mapping tool which reminded us where to look for Giant Hogweed plants as at the start of 2023 our map showed us the sightings from 2022. That of course is where the seeds in the ground already are and would be likely to germinate this year.

Many thanks to all our spotters again who got started in April and May and sent in GPS sightings to the dynamic GPS map which began to be populated with 2023 sightings. We are very grateful to Dave Quarendon for managing this unique GPS mapping tool for use by landowners to assist in locating plants to spray.

I have been impressed by the continued and improved support of all the landowners but as we begin to see fewer plants next year, then we need to remember to check all the areas we have previously for any later germinating seeds.

This year we decided to bring forward our “green Tick” inspection once more to late May rather than early June as we had done in the earlier years. This made final removal of any missed and budded plants easier; so next year it would be helpful, for **all landowners to try to get their final spraying all complete by 2nd week in May**. This will ensure that any sprayed plants are dying by end of May before we carry out our “green tick” inspection.

Any missed or plants sprayed far too late after flowering has occurred are still potentially able to produce a viable seedhead so the heads need to be removed and disposed of safely. Roundup can be sprayed down the cut stem to kill it or by digging out the root.

Because of this, plants left to flower create a huge amount of work compared to timely spraying at the leaf stage.

Remember our maxim **no plant must be allowed to flower.**

A single flowering plant is capable of producing over 10,000 seeds

This photo shows the consequence of leaving one plant to flower. Each of these little germinated seedling plants is a Giant Hogweed plant.



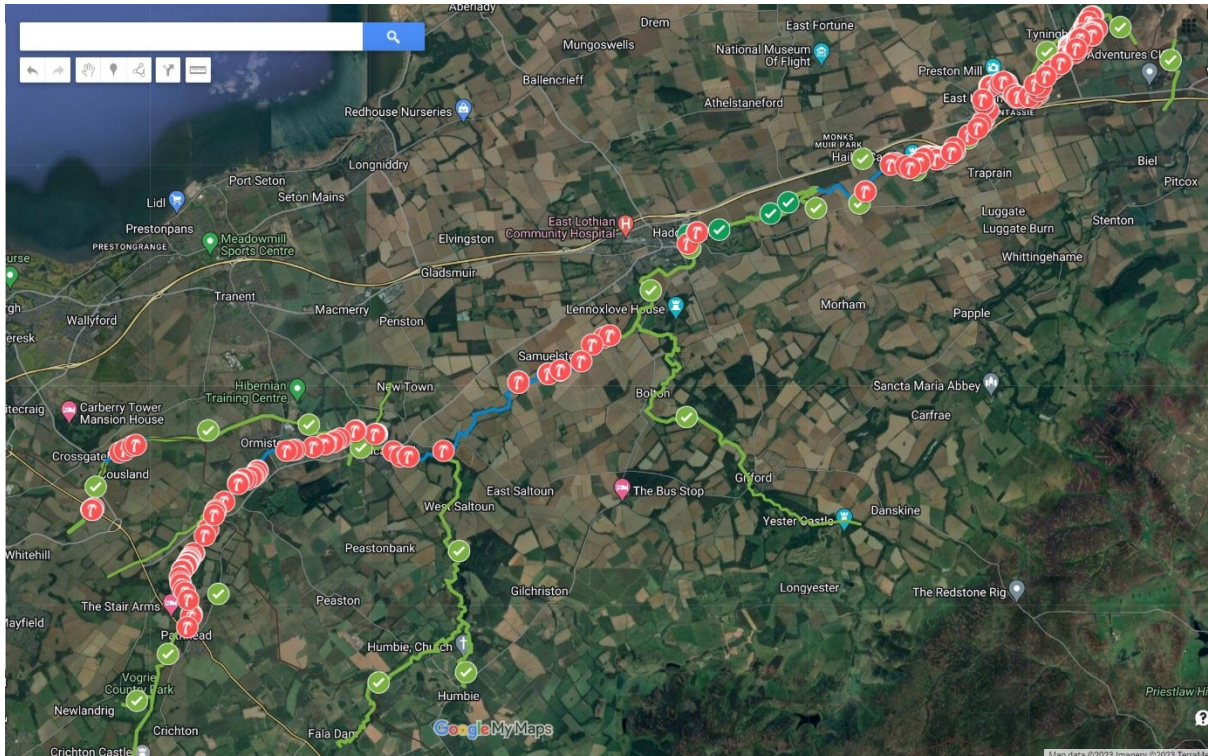
This year we have continued to get reports from volunteers of Giant Hogweed plants in areas around East Lothian outwith our Rivers. This is good because if we can get these areas Giant Hogweed free, it reduces the risks of reinfection into the areas that we have spent years clearing.

It is this combined and consistent effort that will eventually remove Giant Hogweed from the River Tyne and a wider area.

I have concentrated on Giant Hogweed in my comments, but it is important to note that we have also been dealing very successfully with Japanese Knotweed in the upper and lower stretches of the River Tyne and its tributaries.

I hope that as we move to future years that greater emphasis will be given to Himalayan Balsam as it is keen to fill any void in the river edge. My view has always been to encourage landowners to spray it on the way past as we look for Giant Hogweed plants.

We are once again most grateful to Bayer UK for their continuing support in supplying some Roundup for use by knapsack sprayer licenced landowners.



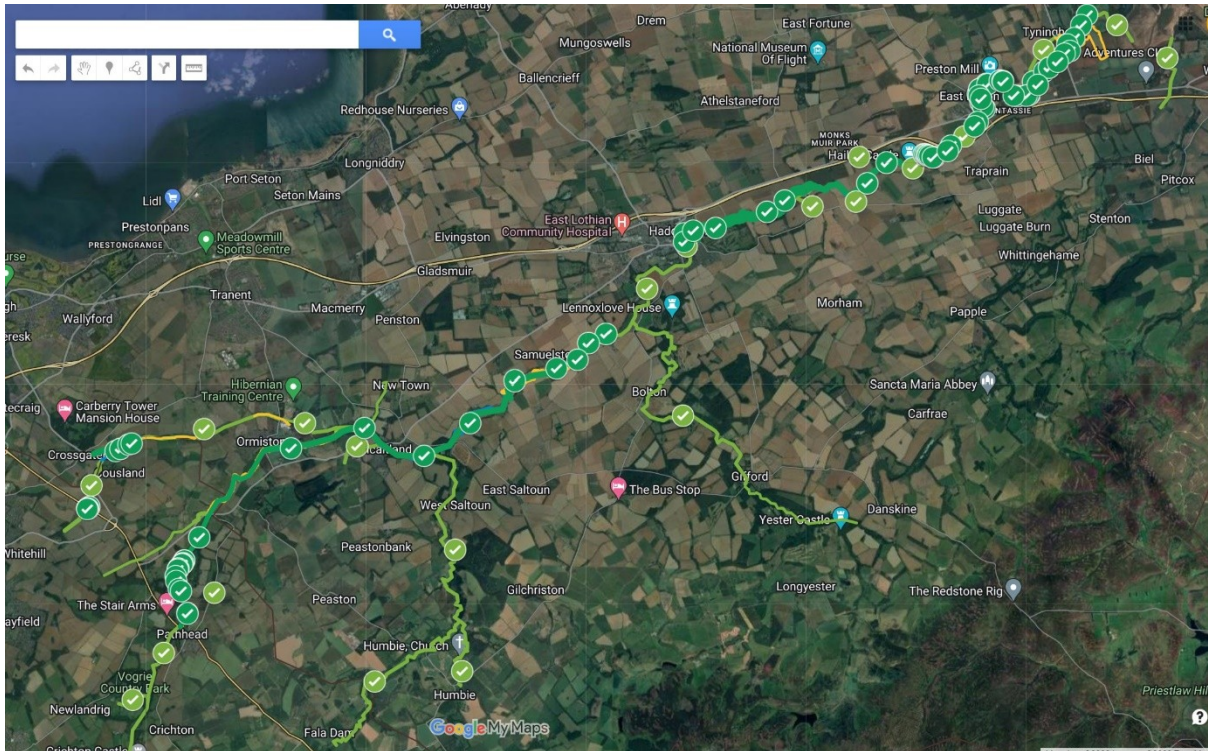
Map showing all 2023 sightings

This map allows GPS position sightings to be placed accurately on to the online map www.elcv.org.uk/HogweedMapTyne

We have now achieved five successful years and the lasting legacy of this project is that the landowners who are doing this voluntarily will take ownership of the project for life. Having put in a great deal of effort to get their land Giant Hogweed free, no landowner will allow it to reappear.

Once again in 2023 we managed with everyone's help to give all 48 miles of the the River Tyne and it's tributaries a green tick.

The map below showed the status of our River Tyne Project at mid August 2023.



A green tick declares that section to be free of any known flowering Giant Hogweed plants. This classification is done after a final inspection of that section and removal of any plants by the landowner or if needed by the volunteers.

Once more this was a truly magnificent feat and my thanks are due to all the volunteer plant spotters and the Riparian landowners who have carried out this removal with the use of Roundup or spade and finally by removal of the last few remaining flowering plants by spade and bagging the flowering heads.

At the western edges of the Tyne tributaries we get very close to the River Esk so we are glad that a similar Giant Hogweed Eradication Project is now gathering momentum in Year 2 on the entire 70 miles of the River Esk and tributaries. This will reduce the risk of reinfection by seed transported by wind or traffic.

We would like all farming, industrial and development landowners anywhere in East Lothian, Mid Lothian and West Lothian to start to remove any isolated pockets of Giant Hogweed to reduce the risks to clean areas and to avoid being accused of being a bad neighbour.



Developers need also be aware that transportation of the top 100 mm of soil containing Giant Hogweed seeds from one site to another site except for specialist disposal is an offence. and makes any future soil removal very expensive.

We are delivering a truly unique, invasive species, eradication project on the River Tyne which you can all be proud of.

We will achieve our objective with the continuing support of all.

James Wyllie

Project Co-ordinator

ELCV River Tyne Giant Hogweed Eradication Project