



# Invasive Plant Disposal Tips

## — for Home Gardeners

Improper disposal of invasive plants in our gardens can lead to their spread into natural areas. Learning how to safely handle and dispose of plant material is essential to decrease the spread of invasive plants and protect local ecosystems.

### Disposal Steps

#### 1. Determine how the plant reproduces:

How a plant reproduces indicates its method of spread in the environment and will help you to determine the most appropriate method of disposal. Are there **viable (reproducing)** plant parts such as roots, seeds, or fruit?

#### 2. Choose the proper disposal method

### Disposal Methods for Plants with **Viable Parts**

Multiple parts of a plant like seeds, fruit, or roots can potentially grow back and spread if they aren't disposed of properly.

#### **DO NOT:**

- **Backyard Compost:** Backyard composting often does not reach temperatures necessary to kill seeds and vegetative parts.
- **Pile Material:** Viable parts left in a pile can resprout and go to seed.

Plants with viable parts need to be disposed of in other ways. Generally, it is best to remove and dispose of material before plants flower and produce seed.

### **DISPOSAL OPTIONS**

#### **Solarize - Bag Method**

- Place plant material in heavy-duty black plastic bags.
- Seal bags tightly and leave in direct sunlight for at least one week.
- Label bags and set out for collection or take to a disposal facility.

#### **Solarize - Tarp Method**

- For large amounts, cover the material with a thick, black tarp.
- Leave in direct sunlight for at least one week.
- When hauling to a disposal facility, ensure the material is securely covered and contained.



**Photo:** Common Buckthorn is a woody plant with abundant berries. Photo courtesy of: Paul Tavares, iNaturalist, licensed under CC-by-NC.

**\*Note:** this factsheet provides general information about invasive plant disposal. For more information on disposal, such as sending plant material to municipal compost or burning, contact your regional district, municipality, or regional invasive species organization to find out about your options.

Learn to grow wisely  
and protect nature  
at [plant-wise.ca](http://plant-wise.ca)

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### Disposal Methods for Plants with **Non-viable Parts**

Woody branches without roots, seeds, or fruit

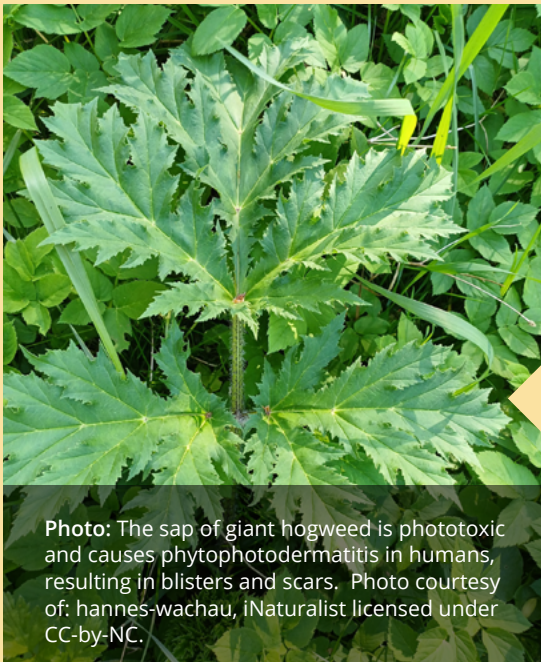
#### **DISPOSAL OPTIONS:**

- Compost
- Chip & Burn/Mulch
- Brush Pile
- Firewood

Woody stems and branches without seeds can be composted, piled, chipped, or used as firewood. Always follow local regulations for burning or brush pile disposal.



**Photo:** Himalayan balsam is a non-woody, herbaceous plant with ballistic seed dispersal. Photo courtesy of: Daryl Coulson, iNaturalist licensed under CC-by-NC.



**Photo:** The sap of giant hogweed is phototoxic and causes phytophotodermatitis in humans, resulting in blisters and scars. Photo courtesy of: hannes-wachau, iNaturalist licensed under CC-by-NC.

### Tips for Plant Removal and Disposal

- **Never dump garden waste into natural areas.** This is how an invasive plant spreads and damages the environment.
- **Plant non-invasive and native alternatives** instead to avoid disposing of invasive plants altogether. Find PlantWise alternatives at: [www.plant-wise.ca](http://www.plant-wise.ca)
- **Be cautious of harmful plants** like giant hogweed and wild parsnip. These plants can cause skin irritation or worse. Use extreme caution and contact your local waste services for guidance on disposal.
- **Watch for plant pests**, such as invasive insects and diseases, in your garden. Movement of infested material may be restricted by government regulation. If you suspect an invasive insect or disease in your garden report it to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency



Find invasive species information for your province or territory at: [plant-wise.ca](http://plant-wise.ca)