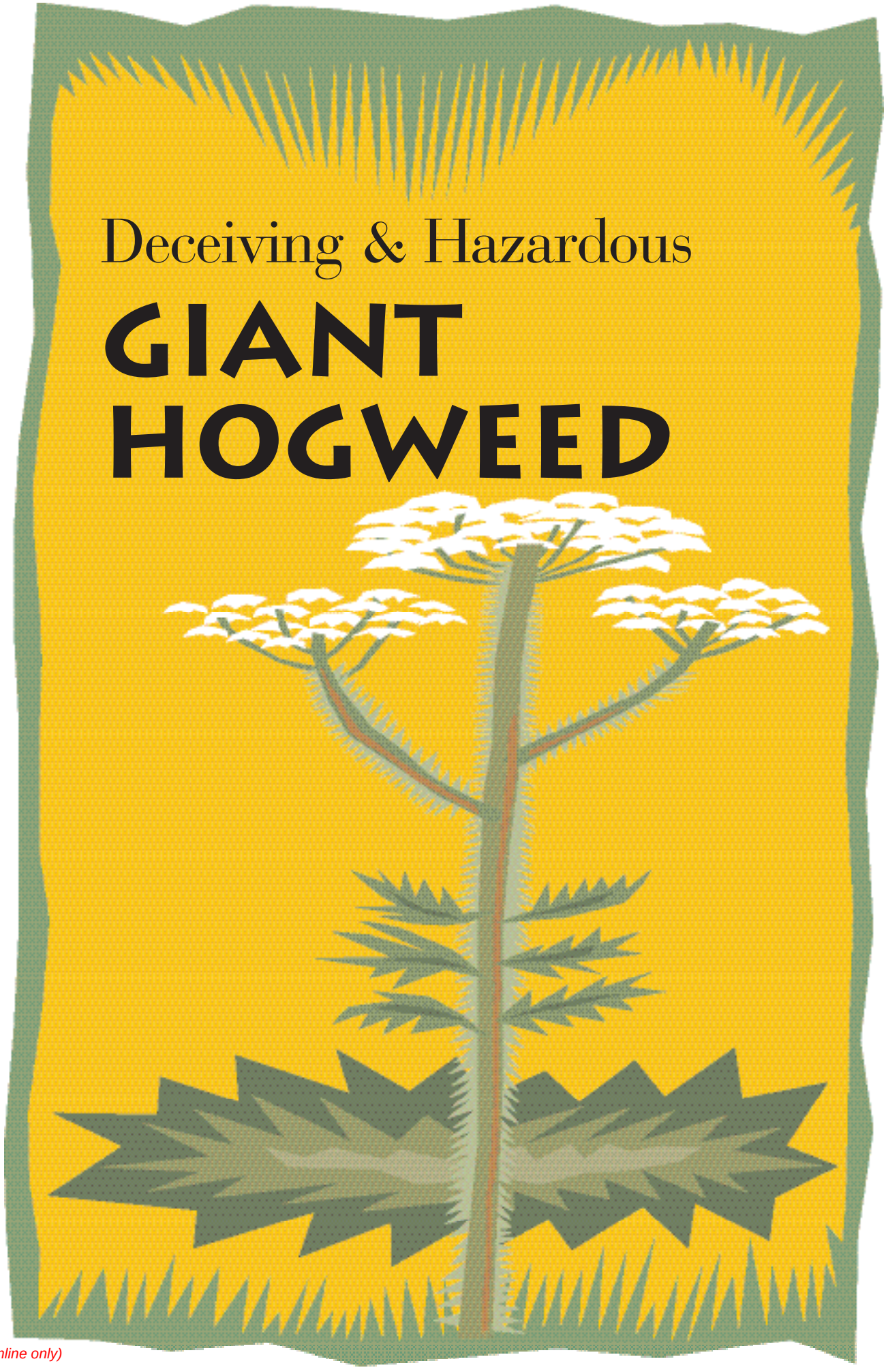
2

Activity Sheet

Deceiving & Hazardous

GIANT HOGWEED



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2 Activity Sheet

Deceiving & Hazardous GIANT HOGWEED

The Ugly Side of GIANT Hogweed

Admired for its elegance and **DRAMATIC** size, giant hogweed was imported into the United States for use in arboretums and gardens. But the plant is no beauty. Similar to native poison ivy and poison oak, the clear, watery sap of giant hogweed causes a skin reaction known as photodermatitis or photosensitivity in both people and animals. When photodermatitis occurs in people, their skin becomes sensitive to sunlight. This sensitivity then leads to itching, redness, swelling, and **PAINFUL** blisters that can last for several months. Contact with the eyes can lead to temporary or, in some cases, permanent blindness.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

To find out more about the "ugly" affects of giant hogweed, fill in the blanks below. Hint: The missing letters are all vowels.

B L ___ N D N ___ S S

B L ___ S T ___ R ___ N G

D ___ S C ___ L ___ R ___ T ___ ___ N

___ R R ___ T ___ T ___ ___ N

P H ___ T ___ D ___ R M ___ T ___ T ___ S

S C ___ R R ___ N G

S W ___ L L ___ N G

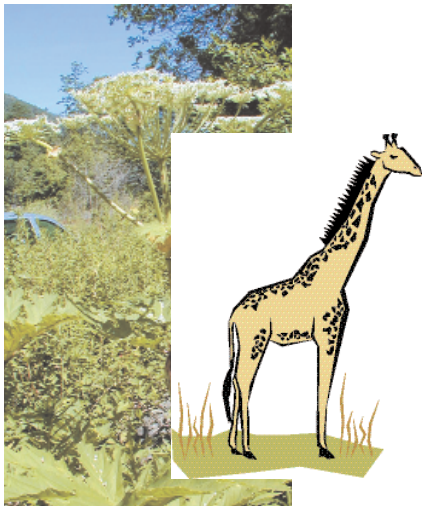
ANSWERS: Back page

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

creepy!

FUN FACTS...

The plant grows as tall as the world's tallest animal—the giraffe!



Giant hogweed is not only a health hazard but an environmental hazard as well. The plant is regulated in 42 States and by the Federal Government as a noxious weed. That designation means it is illegal to grow, sell, or distribute giant hogweed in commerce.

Giant hogweed is in the carrot and parsley family.

[*Heracleum*]

n. The scientific name for giant hogweed, *Heracleum*, comes from the Greek hero Heracles, or Hercules, because this plant was believed to have strong medicinal properties.

ONCE UPON A HOGWEED

Read the story to the right and then answer the questions below.

1 Where are plants and trees grown for scientific or educational purposes? _____

_____

2 Where does the giant hogweed live? _____

_____

_____

_____

3 What happens when you touch a giant hogweed? _____

_____

_____

_____

4 What can be done to prevent the growth of giant hogweed?

_____

_____

_____

_____

In the 1920s, Howie Hogweed left his native home in the Caucasus Mountains of central Asia. Brought to the United States by immigrants starting a new life, Howie was also hoping to find a better life—a life where he could keep his fruits safe from cooking pots across the land. One of Howie's homes in the United States had a fancy name called an arboretum, where plants are grown for educational purposes. It was here that he was carefully cared for, but he soon grew bored with his frequent visitors and limited growing space. Howie wished for freedom and soon escaped to homeowners' gardens, river banks, and ditches along railroad tracks and roadways. There, he began his life of destruction. Hikers, gardeners, and land managers started to complain that when they touched him, their skin itched, swelled, and blistered. Herbicides were poured and sprayed onto Howie to eliminate the problem. But he continues to look for new homes to grow despite these attempts. May Howie NOT live happily ever after.

ANSWERS

FILL IN THE BLANKS

BLINDNESS
BLISTERING
DISCOLORATION
IRRITATION
PHOTODERMATITIS
SCARRING
SWELLING

ONCE UPON A HOGWEED

1. Arboretum
2. Homeowners' gardens, river banks, and along railroads and roadways.
3. Skin will start to itch, swell, and blister.
4. Use herbicides.