

Public Health Views and News



A REGIONAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL NEWSLETTER

Summer-2017 Volume 29, No. 1

Plants That Bite

From the desk of H. Lauren Vogel, D.O., Medical Director

Most people have heard the classic saying “leaves of three let it be” regarding the dangers of poison ivy and poison oak. Many know that poison sumac grows as a shrub with leaves in pairs that turn red in the fall and has pale yellow to cream colored berries. And most know the term “stinging” nettle. Now, here is a new adage. “Beware of white lacy wildflowers!” There are newer and more serious dangerous plants in the Michigan area.¹ Wild parsnip and giant hogweed are examples of plants that contain substances (psotalen) that react with sunlight to produce skin reactions that cause rash, blisters and burning pain. Scarring and blindness have been associated with the toxic plant exposure.^{2,3}

These plants grow in sunny areas, along fence rows and in uncultivated fields but are adaptable and can grow in almost any area. They flower in early June and are hard to control. Both the plants and their seeds cause burns when exposed to skin and sunlight. Weed whacking is dangerous due to exposed skin exposure and if used after the flowers have produced seeds will spread the seeds over wider areas. Animals exposed to the plant resin can carry it on their fur and lead to human exposure with the animal contact. Cattle consuming the plants demonstrate poor weight gain and infertility.

Accurate identification is the first step toward eradicating these dangerous weeds. If you suspect that you have encountered giant hogweed or wild parsnip, email 4 photographs of the whole plant, leaves, flower head and stem to the Michigan State University Diagnostics Services at MDA-Info@Michigan.gov for confirmation. You will receive an email response letting you know whether the plant is giant hogweed or wild parsnip.^{5,6}

Skin contact followed by exposure to sunlight is dangerous and can result in painful, burning blisters and red blotches that later develop into purplish or blackened scars. The reaction can happen within 24 to 48 hours after contact with sap, and scars may persist for several years. Contact with the eyes can lead to temporary or permanent blindness. Wash immediately with soap and water if skin exposure occurs. If possible, keep the contacted area covered with clothing for several days to reduce light exposure.

In this Issue:

Plants That Bite	1
IHPI SEMINAR SERIES AND WEBCAST	3
Zika Surveillance	4
Lead Blood Testing Safety	4

*If you would like to subscribe to this Newsletter electronically, please send an email with the words “**subscribe to HP Newsletter**” to Nana Amaniampong, Health Promotion and Education Coordinator at amaniampong@bhsj.org.*

A Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency Publication

Find us on the web at <http://www.bhsj.org>

Page 1

REFERENCES

1. A Guide to Summer's Poisonous Plants. AhealthierMichigan. June 2016.
<https://www.ahealthiermichigan.org/2016/06/22/a-guide-to-summers-poisonous-plants/>. Accessed March 2017.
2. Wild Parsnip. Invasive Species Alert.
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/invasives/Wild_parsnip_521411_7.pdf. Accessed March 2017.
3. Giant Hogweed. MSU Extension Bulletin E-2935. June 2012.
http://msue.anr.msu.edu/uploads/files/E2935_2012_Revision.pdf. Accessed March 2017.
4. Parsnip Brochure. Internet Resource.
http://map.co.door.wi.us/swcd/invasive/Publications/Parsnip_Brochure.pdf. Accessed March 2017.
5. Giant Hogweed. MSU Extension Bulletin E-2935. June 2012.
http://msue.anr.msu.edu/uploads/files/E2935_2012_Revision.pdf. Accessed March 2017.
6. Giant Hogweed Overview. MSARD. 2017.
http://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1566_2403_34669---,00.html. Accessed May 2017

Plants That Bite (continued)

If you want to remove giant hogweed or wild parsnip, be sure to take appropriate precautions to prevent exposure to plant sap by wearing protective coveralls, rubber gloves, eye protection and sturdy shoes. Place plant parts in heavy duty garbage bags. Do not mow, cut or weed-whack to try to control the plant mechanically. The safest solution is to photograph the plant, send the photos to MSU for accurate identification and if the results document danger have professional intervention to remove the plants.

Giant Hogweed



Wild Parsnip



IHPI SEMINAR SERIES AND WEBCAST: NAVIGATING THE NEW AND IMPROVED MAPS.

The University of Michigan will be hosting a Seminar: The New and Improved MAPs. The Seminar will walk participants through recent changes in MAPs System, how to best use it and why to use it when prescribing opioids. The Michigan Automated Prescription System enables practitioners to determine if patients are receiving controlled substances from other providers to assist in prevention of prescription drug abuse.

The seminar will take place at the University of Michigan Frankel Cardiovascular Center Danto Auditorium on Tuesday July 18th from 4pm-5pm. Kim Gaedeke and Rebecca Haffajee will be speaking at this event. If you are interested in the opioid epidemic, you won't want to miss this Michigan open event. If you are interested in recording CME activity, visit www.umhscme.com using the following program ID: IHPI Research Seminar Series-05182.

SAVE THE DATE

**Navigating the
New and Improved
MAPS**

How and why to use it
when prescribing opioids

Lead Blood Testing Safety

The Center for Disease and Control and the Food and Drug Administration are warning Americans that certain lead tests manufactured by Magellan Diagnostics may provide inaccurate results for some children and adults in the USA. The Center for Disease and Control recommends parents or children younger than 6 years of age, currently pregnant women and nursing mothers who have been tested for lead exposure by Magellan Diagnostics should consult a health care provider about whether they should be re-tested. Food and Drug Administration's warning is based on currently available data that indicate Magellan lead test, when performed on blood drawn from a vein may provide results that are lower than the actual level of lead in the blood.

Lead exposure can affect nearly every system in the body and can potentially lead to serious health issues. Lead poisoning is also particularly dangerous to infants and young children as well. The Center for Disease and Control is recommending that health care providers re-test children younger than 6 years of age and women who are currently pregnant or nursing if they were tested using any Magellan Diagnostic LeadCare Systems.



**BRANCH-HILLSDALE-ST. JOSEPH
COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCY**

Coldwater Office
570 N. Marshall Road
Coldwater, MI 49036
517-279-9561

Hillsdale Office
20 Care Drive
Hillsdale, MI 49242
517-437-7395

Three Rivers Office
1110 Hill Street
Three Rivers MI 49093
269-273-2161

Zika Surveillance

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency (BHSJ-CHA) has applied for and received grant money from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to participate in a Zika Surveillance and Community Support program this summer. The grant money was made available to MDHHS through the CDC and then passed along to the participating local health departments in Michigan. The Zika grant has two main objectives: 1.) Collect and identify mosquitoes from various locations in each county. 2.) Provide education in the local communities about the risks and possible control measures for the Zika virus.

The BHSJ-CHA has hired 3 college interns (one in each county) to work the program this summer. Each of our interns have identified 5 locations within their respective counties to set mosquito traps. The traps are set out 2 times per week and left out for a period of 24 hours. The traps are then collected and the mosquitoes are all identified and recorded. There are two species of mosquitoes that are associated with the Zika virus, the *Aedes Aegypti* and the *Aedes Albopictus*. The *Aedes Aegypti* is not typically found in the northern regions of the U. S., however the *Aedes Albopictus* has been documented as far north as northern Indiana and northern Ohio. Although the *Aedes Albopictus* has not yet been documented in Michigan it is certainly close enough that its migration into southern Michigan is not unlikely.

As part of the Community Support piece of the grant our interns have done a great job of developing printed materials that outline the risks associated with the Zika virus along with prevention protocols associated with the virus. The interns have also done a number of presentations throughout the communities in an effort to bring awareness to the dangers involved with Zika. Another component to the community support outreach for the grant involves a mosquito harborage reduction campaign. We have made an effort to reach out the large agricultural population in our counties with a proposal to replace standard tires (typically used as weights on the tarps over silage piles) with a product called sidewalls. The sidewalls are simply the sidewall portions of tires. The sidewalls provide the necessary weight to hold down the tarps but do not contain the reservoirs where water can collect and breed mosquitoes that standard tires do.

To this point in the project we have not identified any of the Zika associated mosquitoes nor have any of the other participating health departments in Michigan. The grant covers 16 weeks of surveillance which started in early May and will conclude in late August.