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IMPACT OF INVASIVE SPECIES OF THE GENUS *HERACLEUM* SPP. (APIACEAE) ON ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN HEALTH

Summary

The aim of the paper is to show the complexity of the nature and influence of hogweed: *Heracleum mantegazzianum* and *Heracleum sosnowskyi* on environment. Physical and biochemical features of these species and differences in their morphology and genetics are described. The effect of both the species on human and animal health is discussed as well as their influence on environment, both in the positive and negative aspect. Considering the need for the control of invasion of these species an attempt was undertaken to determine the factors conducive to their spreading. The attention is paid to informational activities related to health risks in a direct or indirect contact with the plants. Inexactness of genetic studies on the relationship between the examined species and the possibility of forming hybrids demands continuation of research on the effects of *Heracleum* spp on human health and environment.