



Control of non-native invasive species and noxious weeds.

The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 makes it an offence to introduce new species of animal and plant into the wild. A non-native invasive species is a species that is not indigenous - it has been transported outside of its natural range and often threatens environmental, agricultural or economic resources.

Increasing levels of activities such as global trade, tourism and travel have resulted in an unprecedented dispersal of species into new habitats throughout the world.

Non-native invasive species are without natural competitors or predators and are able to dominate or out-compete other species. Once established, non-native invasive species are often very difficult and costly to control or eradicate, which is why prevention is so important. Examples are Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam.

The problems caused by non-native invasive species are likely to increase in line with further globalisation, increased travel, and the effects of climate change. Problems vary with species but include

loss of habitat and native species, damage to buildings and structures and/or harmful to people.



Noxious or 'Injurious' Weeds refers to a number of species listed in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977.

These are:

- **common ragwort**
- **spear thistle**
- **creeping or field thistle**
- **curled dock**
- **broadleaved dock**
- **wild oat**

Noxious or injurious plants threaten agricultural productivity. Common ragwort is a particular concern as it is toxic to livestock if ingested.

Loss of biodiversity interest through the infestation of invasive species, damage to structures and buildings and health and safety concerns are all relevant issues for Translink rail corridors and properties.

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Guidance / Good Practice Notes

1. Always check Translink records to ensure that the area you're working in is not subject to designations or protection. An effective way to check this is to consult with the GISTRAN Unit for digital maps or the paper files held at Infrastructure at Milewater Road.
2. Invasive species may pose a threat to the site if, for example, they begin to displace native plants thereby reducing wildlife interest. Invasive species must be controlled if they threaten to invade neighbouring land – the area does not need to be designated for conservation reasons.
3. Before commencing work, undertake a basic check of the site for signs of wildlife interest, or non-native invasive species eg Japanese knotweed and ensure that employees and contractors are made aware of any issues.
4. Plan the work – put a management plan in place to control these species and ensure that any flora and fauna issues are managed appropriately.
5. If disposing of non-native invasive species material ensure that the landfill site being used is licensed to receive controlled waste.
6. Be mindful of not spreading the invasive plant species from one site to another via contaminated boots, equipment, machinery, etc. Before leaving site, carry out a quick check of equipment for fragments etc and clean on site if possible.
7. If buying-in sub-soil, top soil etc, look for assurances that the soil is not contaminated or request soil that is screened for invasive species.
8. Ensure the site is secure against illegal dumping. Very often illegally dumped material from other sites is contaminated.
9. Only employ chemical control methods when non-chemical methods are not possible.
10. It is important to wear the correct PPE, particularly when handling giant hogweed.

Web links for advice and information on management:

<http://www.invasivespeciesireland.com/> - An all-Ireland governmental initiative to control and monitor non-native invasive species in Ireland. Within Northern Ireland DARD is responsible for legislating/enforcing on noxious weeds
<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/>. Information on distribution and management in Northern Ireland can be found at
<http://www.habitas.org.uk/invasive/>. The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology have also developed information sheets and can be found at <http://www.ceh.ac.uk/sections/wq/CAPMInformationsheets.htm>



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	Giant Hogweed	Japanese Knotweed
Image Reference (Please consult web links on page two for further images, info etc.)		
Description	Very tall(3-5m) with white flowers and purple- spotted stems. Grows near watercourses.	Tall with reddish/purple stems with small cream flowers. Can grow through concrete, brick-work etc.
Non-Chemical Control (small infestations)	DO NOT FLAIL Cutting - generally only effective if done below ground. Do not cut tall plants over 1.5 m because of the risk of skin contact. NB wear appropriate PPE	DO NOT FLAIL Cutting – cut in June/July when stems are mature. Ensure cut material is left to die (away from watercourses) on a ground sheet or bagged. Check site for re-growth.
Control Timescales	Cut below ground level every two weeks through spring until no new seedlings appear, or for at least five years.	Control required for at least five years.
Chemical Control (large infestations)	Only use Glyphosate. Apply March onwards or when plant is still at manageable height. Treat neighbouring sites at the same time. Additional applications at 4-6 weekly intervals may be needed.	Use Glyphosate. Plants take up to 6 weeks to show signs of die-back. If re-growth occurs in the same season, apply Glyphosate again when there are enough new leaves to absorb the herbicide (late season).
Control timescales	Treatment required for up to five years. Seeds are viable for up to ten years. Monitor annually.	Treat ment for up to 5 years . Monitor site annually.
Disposal methods	Dispose to a licensed, contained landfill site which can accept it.	Incinerate cuttings or dispose of soil at a licensed, contained landfill site which can accept it.

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Environmental Infosheet

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	Himalayan Balsam	Common Ragwort
Image Reference (Please consult web links on page two for further images, info etc.)		
Description	Tall annual. Stem pinky red, hollow and jointed. Pink – purple flowers.	Biennial with a rosette of leaves in the first year and flowering (yellow) in the second. Seeds are poisonous to livestock.
Non-Chemical Control (small infestations)	Cutting - at ground level before the end of June and before the plant flowers and sets seeds. Do not cut too early in spring, as plant will re-grow. The plant can also be easily manually pulled and is an effective, inexpensive method.	DO NOT CUT Digging - most effective method is to remove whole plant including roots. Pulling - always wear gloves. Pull in spring when the plant is immature and before flowering is complete. Remove as much root as possible to minimise re-growth.
Control Timescales	Control required annually until no new seedlings appear.	Control required for at least two years.
Chemical Control (large infestations)	Use Glyphosate. Apply to leaves and stems in late spring and before the end of June. Apply chemical before plants have flowered.	Use Glyphosate, MCPA/MCPB. Will need more than one application. Rosette stage - first application applied in April/May. Flowering stage - first application October before frost damages foliage.
Control timescales	Treatment required for between 5-10 years. Monitor site annually.	Treatment required for two years. Make the second application in April of the following calendar year.
Disposal methods	Dispose of at a licensed, contained landfill site.	Dispose to a licensed, contained landfill site. Can also be left to dry and then incinerated.

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