



# Management Measures for Widely Spread Species (WSS) in Northern Ireland

## American skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*)

As per Article 19 requirement of EU Regulation 1143/2014  
*on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of  
invasive alien species*



*Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*

<b>American skunk cabbage <i>Lysichiton americanus</i></b>		
<b>Description</b>	Native to North America. A tall herb growing up to 1.5m in height. Yellow flowers are produced in spring that resemble those of wild arum (lords-and-ladies) and a basal rosette of stemmed leathery leaves up to 1m long. Emits a strong odour like that of a skunk.	
<b>NI Status</b>	Widespread, present in every county but not generally common throughout Northern Ireland, occurring only in wet woodlands and carrs, and on muddy pond margins, stream sides and riversides. For current distribution visit <a href="#">NBN Atlas Northern Ireland</a> .	
<b>Pathways</b>	Popular plant in water-gardens, parks and landscaped estates from which it either escapes or merely spreads. Short distance dispersal is by seed. Longer distance dispersal is via downstream transport of seeds and fragmented rhizomes; may also be dispersed by machinery, floods, birds and mammals.	
<b>Aim</b>	To contain and, where possible, reduce the extent of American skunk cabbage with localised eradications being carried out in high priority areas.	
<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure strict biosecurity when working in proximity to <i>L. americanus</i> to avoid further spread.</li> <li>2. Eradicate small populations of American skunk cabbage locally, prioritising especially vulnerable sites (e.g. ASSIs) and in areas in which seed will be spread by water.</li> <li>3. Where populations are discovered in new, high priority sites (e.g. ASSIs) attempt eradication, and revisit later in the season and in subsequent years.</li> <li>4. Reduce distribution across N.I. by 50% by 2030.</li> <li>5. Widespread restoration of native species and habitats</li> </ol>	
<b>Prevention</b>		
<b>Border and pathway actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- American skunk cabbage is already established in many wetland areas of Northern Ireland.</li> <li>- Under the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation 1143/2014 it is an offence to plant this species, or otherwise cause it to grow, in the environment.</li> <li>- Under the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation it is also an offence to import into the EU, keep, grow or cultivate, transport (to, from or within the EU; except to facilitate eradication), place on the market, use or exchange this species - <b>unless there are specific exemptions or permits.</b></li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ID sheet developed and deployed to border staff – Border Force, Portal Inspectors (DAERA), Plant Health Inspectorate (DAERA/FS), etc.</li> <li>- Liaison with Wildlife Crime Northern Ireland (PAWNI) to ensure species is not being traded.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Stakeholder communications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to raise public and other stakeholder awareness of invasive non-native wetland plants and provide advice including guidance on control methods and identification information.</li> <li>- Awareness raising campaigns - Check Clean Dry (<a href="https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/what-can-i-do/check-clean-dry/">https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/what-can-i-do/check-clean-dry/;</a>) Be Plant Wise (<a href="https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/what-can-i-do/be-plant-wise/">https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/what-can-i-do/be-plant-wise/</a>) to alert water users, gardeners and retailers to the threat the species poses.</li> <li>- Traders are not permitted to purchase or sell this species.</li> <li>- Gardeners who have it growing in their private collections, must act responsibly and not cultivate it or its seed to spread further inside or outside of their land-holding and if in a sensitive area, they may be asked to remove it completely to avoid risk. Owners should consider safely removing and disposing of any plant covered by the IAS Regulation by composting or burning or transfer to landfill.</li> </ul>
<b>Early detection and rapid response</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Surveillance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A new, dedicated surveillance mechanism is not necessary as a number of existing recording schemes allow reporting of this species:</li> <li>- In Northern Ireland species records are entered to CEDaR online recording via <a href="http://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI">www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI</a> or via the Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - <a href="http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting/">http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting/</a>. Entering a record generates an email to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Team.</li> <li>- The Botanical Society of the British Isles Map Scheme also compiles comprehensive distribution maps for plants across the UK.</li> <li>- The Biological Records Centre (<a href="http://www.brc.ac.uk">www.brc.ac.uk</a>) collects presence records of all wildlife species in the UK through a network of voluntary recorders on <a href="#">iRecord</a> online or by the <a href="#">iRecord app</a>. The BRC provides the opportunity to download distribution data and visualise it as customisable maps, via the National Biodiversity Network Atlas Northern Ireland (<a href="https://northernireland.nbnatlas.org/">https://northernireland.nbnatlas.org/</a>).</li> <li>- Relevant Government agencies such as DfI Roads/Rivers, AFBI, Loughs Agency, Forest Service and Northern Ireland Environment Agency record the presence of invasive non-native species as a part of their work and will then initiate management measures for WSS on their own sites.</li> <li>- Non-Governmental Organisations (e.g. Rivers and Fishery Trusts and Boards, Wildlife Trusts, etc.) undertake surveys of freshwater habitats and report incidental sightings of invasive</li> </ul>

	<p>non-native species and will then initiate management measures for WSS on their own sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All N.I. Councils to also record and report presence of invasive non-native species on their estates and initiate management measures for WSS on their own sites.</li> </ul>
<b>Rapid response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In certain areas of N.I. a rapid eradication following a confirmed sighting may be appropriate, particularly in cases where it is first discovered in a new catchment. Once widely established sustainable control is extremely difficult.</li> <li>- Eradication depends on manual removal of plants, including rhizomes.</li> </ul>
<b>Long-term management</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When American skunk cabbage is not yet widespread within an area it should be managed in order to remove or contain it.</li> <li>- Plants, new seedlings and rhizomes can be dug out. All underground parts need to be removed to prevent regeneration.</li> <li>- After initial removal, several years of inspection and seedling removal are necessary until the seedbank is exhausted.</li> <li>- Chemical control with herbicide can be effective during drier parts of the year when access to muddy areas is easier.</li> <li>- Although not an aquatic plant, America skunk cabbage can be found on the banksides of watercourses and spread downstream via transport of seeds.</li> <li>- Guidance on the management of American skunk cabbage is available on the Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - <a href="https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/species-accounts/established/terrestrial/american-skunk-cabbage">https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/species-accounts/established/terrestrial/american-skunk-cabbage</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Research</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No known current research.</li> </ul>	

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