



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

Chilean Rhubarb (*Gunnera tinctoria*)

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

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Chilean Rhubarb <i>Gunnera tinctoria</i>	
Description	<p>A large perennial plant that can grow up to 2m tall, with leaves 2m in diameter. Mature plants can have rhizomes 1.5-2m long growing above ground. Although not related to common rhubarb it is similar in appearance. Distinctive large cone-shaped flower head.</p>
NI Status	<p>Widespread, present in every county but not generally common throughout Northern Ireland. It occurs along rivers and roads, is usually found close to human habitation. Common garden ornamental plant. For current distribution visit NBN Atlas Northern Ireland.</p>
Pathways	<p>Popular ornamental plant in gardens and parks. Short distance dispersal is by rhizome and seed. Longer distance dispersal is via downstream transport of seeds and fragmented rhizomes; may also be dispersed by machinery, floods, birds and animals.</p>
Aim	<p>To contain and, where possible, reduce the extent of Chilean Rhubarb. Localised eradications carried out in high priority, isolated, new or problematic areas.</p>
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure strict biosecurity when working in proximity to <i>G. tinctoria</i> to avoid further spread. 2. Eradicate small populations of Chilean rhubarb locally, prioritising especially vulnerable sites (e.g. ASSIs) (where feasible) and areas in which seed will be spread by water. 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. 4. Reduce distribution across N.I. by 50% by 2030 5. Widespread restoration of native species and habitats
Prevention	
Border and pathway actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chilean Rhubarb is already established in across Northern Ireland. - 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. - 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 - unless there are specific exemptions or permits.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ID sheet developed and deployed to border staff – Border Force, Portal Inspectors (DAERA), Plant Health Inspectorate (DAERA/FS), etc. - Liaison with Wildlife Crime Northern Ireland (PAWNI) to ensure species is not being traded.
<p style="text-align: center;">Stakeholder communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to raise public and other stakeholder awareness of non-native invasive plants and provide advice including guidance on control methods and identification information. - Awareness raising campaigns - Check Clean Dry (https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/what-can-i-do/check-clean-dry/;) Be Plant Wise (https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/what-can-i-do/be-plant-wise/) to alert water users, gardeners and retailers to the threat the species poses. - Traders are not permitted to purchase or sell this species, however other <i>Gunnera</i> species are common ornamental garden plants and <i>G. tinctoria</i> may be traded inadvertently. - 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.
Early detection and rapid response	
<p style="text-align: center;">Surveillance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new, dedicated surveillance mechanism is not necessary as a number of existing recording schemes allow reporting of this species: - In Northern Ireland species records are entered to CEDaR online recording via www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI or via the Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting/. Entering a record generates an email to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Invasive Species Team. - The Botanical Society of the British Isles Map Scheme compiles comprehensive distribution maps for plants across the UK. - The Biological Records Centre (www.brc.ac.uk) collects presence records of all wildlife species in the UK through a network of voluntary recorders on iRecord online or by the iRecord app. The BRC provides the opportunity to download distribution data and visualise it as customisable maps, via the National Biodiversity Network Atlas Northern Ireland (https://northernireland.nbnatlas.org/). - 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 non-native species and will then initiate management measures for WSS on their own sites. - 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.
Rapid response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. - Chemical treatment can be effective in the short term (can enable access on dense established colonies) or on young saplings (can grow from seedbank after physical removal). However for effective eradication, usually the rhizome must be physically removed.
Long-term management	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When Chilean rhubarb is not yet widespread within an area it should be managed to remove or contain it, where feasible. - New seedlings and flower heads can be physically removed to prevent spread. - Plants and rhizomes can be dug out. All underground parts need to be removed to prevent regeneration. After initial removal, several years of inspection and seedling removal are necessary until the seedbank is exhausted. Chemical control with herbicide can have some short term benefits, however long term management is likely to be an integrated approach. - Guidance on the management of Chilean rhubarb is available on the Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/species-accounts/established/terrestrial/giant-rhubarb 	
Research	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No known current research. 	

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