



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

**Himalayan knotweed (*Koenigia polystachya*)**

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



An Agency within the Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

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Gníomhaireacht de chuid na Roinne  
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

An Agency wí'in the Department o  
**Fairmin, Environment  
an' Kintra Matthers**

<b>Himalayan knotweed <i>Koenigia polystachya</i></b>	
<b>Description</b>	Himalayan knotweed is a shrubby perennial plant, measuring 40-120cm in height, and up to 180cm. The flowers are usually creamy white to pinkish and their lobes range between 3-5, with 5 lobes being more common.
<b>NI Status</b>	As of 2023 becoming widespread, mainly in riparian locations and spreading along most major rivers in Northern Ireland e.g. Lagan, Roe, Foyle, Upper and Lower Bann, Ballinderry River etc. For current distribution visit <a href="#">NBN atlas Northern Ireland</a> .
<b>Pathways</b>	Himalayan knotweed was brought to Great Britain in the early 20th century as an ornamental plant and has since spread from containment. It could further be spread by contaminated soils.
<b>Aim</b>	To contain and reduce the extent of Himalayan knotweed with localised eradications being carried out in high priority areas on both a biodiversity and a health and safety basis.
<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure strict biosecurity when working in proximity to <i>Koenigia polystachya</i> to avoid further spread.</li> <li>2. Eradicate small populations of <i>Koenigia polystachya</i> 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> </ol>
<b>Prevention</b>	
<b>Border and pathway actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Himalayan knotweed is already widely established in a number of locations in Northern Ireland.</li> <li>- Under the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation 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> <li>- ID sheet developed and deployed to border staff - Border Force, Portal Inspectors and Plant Health Inspectorate (FS), etc.</li> <li>- Liaison with Wildlife Crime Northern Ireland (PAWNI) to ensure species is not being traded.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Stakeholder communications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to raise public and other stakeholder awareness of invasive non-native plants and provide advice including guidance on control methods and identification information.</li> <li>- Northern Ireland versions of 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 gardeners and retailers to the threat the species poses.</li> <li>- Traders are not permitted to purchase or sell this species.</li> <li>- Gardeners and land owners must act responsibly and not allow Himalayan knotweed to spread. They must initiate management measures to remove it from their land. Owners should consider the safe removal and disposal of this plant. It is classified as 'controlled waste' &amp; must be removed to a licensed landfill but otherwise can be cut down and left to rot in situ.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Early detection and rapid response</b></p>	
<p><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 Ireland website - <a href="https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting">https://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 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="http://iRecord">iRecord</a> online or by the <a href="http://iRecord">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 non-native species and will then initiate management measures for WSS on their own sites.</li> <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> </ul>
<b>Long-term management</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When Himalayan knotweed is not yet widespread within a catchment it must be managed to reduce its impacts and to avoid further spread.</li> <li>- Herbicide may be appropriate provided carried out by PA6Aw qualified operatives if adjacent to water.</li> <li>- Guidance on the management of Himalayan knotweed is available on the Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - <a href="https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/species-accounts/established/terrestrial/himalayan-knotweed">https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/species-accounts/established/terrestrial/himalayan-knotweed</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Research</b>	
<p>This species may benefit from biological control trials being carried out on Japanese knotweed as both plants have very similar invasive characteristics. Further study of potential biocontrol agents is required to clarify whether or not there is some chance of their successful use in its control.</p>	

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