

It is illegal "to plant or otherwise encourage" the growth or spread of invasive plants, such as Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam or Giant Hogweed. They spread quickly, dominate habitats, grow densely and shade out native plants. Biodiversity is affected as the consequent loss in plant diversity leads to a reduction in the population of insects and birds.



Japanese Knotweed forms dense clumps over 3m high. The rhizome roots can extend several metres away from the original plant and be up to 2m deep. The plant is strong enough to penetrate foundations, walls, roads and drainage pipework. It spreads through progression of its root system and through fragments of its stem or root (a piece as small as 0.8 grams can regenerate). The stem is hollow with distinct nodes like bamboo and breaks easily.

In Spring it is fleshy and red tinged and in Summer it is green with purple speckles. Leaves in Spring are pinky red and uncurl as the stem grows. In Summer they become large oval or heart shaped mid-green. Flowers are cream coloured and appear in drooping clusters towards the end of August. The plant dies before November often leaving behind the upright brown, hollow, woody stalks.

DO

- ✓ IMMEDIATELY stop all work within 7 metres of the suspect plant and contact your line manager for instructions if you think you have identified Japanese Knotweed on your site.

DON'T

- ✗ DON'T excavate or move any soil from within 7 metres of a Japanese Knotweed plant without instruction.
- ✗ DON'T track plant or vehicles over the area.
- ✗ DON'T stockpile potentially contaminated material within 10 metres of a watercourse or drain.



Himalayan Balsam produces more than 500 seeds before it dies. The slightest touch to seed pods causes them to burst open catapulting and dispersing the seeds up to 7m away. It grows up to 2.5m tall and the stem is pinky red, hollow, sappy and brittle.

Leaves occur in two's or three's from the same point on the stem, are spear shaped with serrated edges, shiny and dark green with a reddish mid-rib.

Flowers, which are similar to a Foxglove, are purplish pink, carried on long stalks and appear from June to October.



Giant Hogweed is now wide spread throughout the UK. It grows to over 5m tall. The seeds can remain viable on or in the ground for up to 15 years.

The plant contains large amounts of poisonous sap, which, on contact with the skin and in the presence of sunlight, causes severe irritation, swelling and painful watery blisters. This reaction can occur up to 24 hours after exposure to sunlight. Contact with eyes can cause temporary blindness.

Giant Hogweed can cause significant harm to grazing animals.

DO

- ✓ Stop work in the immediate area and contact your manager for instruction if you think you have identified either Himalayan Balsam or Giant Hogweed on your site.
- ✓ Wear protective clothing before touching Giant Hogweed and seek medical advice if you have been in contact with the sap.

DON'T

- ✗ DON'T disturb the seedpods.
- ✗ DON'T move soil that may contain seeds or other plant materials without specific instructions.
- ✗ DON'T handle Giant Hogweed until further advice is taken.