

Environmental Guidance Note

Invasive Terrestrial (land) Plants

Links to relevant SHEMS Standards, Minimum Standards and Forms

Links to relevant guidance (SHEMS or external)

Contact the [relevant environmental manager or advisor](#) for more information.

Purpose

■ must ensure that invasive plants are not spread by our activities so that they grow in the wild. Invasive plants cause environmental damage by spreading rapidly and taking over other plant species. Some invasive species can cause physical damage to structures or have properties that are hazardous to health. Invasive species are controlled by UK legislation.

SHEMS-STD-GR-062
Ecology and Biodiversity

SHEMS-REG-GR-005
SHE Legal and Other Register

This guidance is aimed at ■ employees involved in planning or undertaking works that have the potential to disturb or spread invasive plants. This includes designers, planners and project / site managers.

Guidance

Planning

- Early identification of invasive plants reduces delays and cost
- Sites may require ecological surveys to identify invasive plants
- must ensure that invasive plants are not spread as a result of the works
- Upon identification of invasive plants, assess whether they require removal for works to progress
 - In-situ treatment of invasive species using herbicide may be suitable for long-term management contracts
 - Construction activities may require eradication of invasive plants via short-term methods including excavation / treatment / disposal
- In either case, ■ must ensure that competent contractors are appointed to deliver the required management.
- Where the subcontractor is not a specialist in the management of invasive species, all works must be carried out under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist. This is to be clearly communicated in contract documentation.

Environmental Permits and Authorisations (England & Wales)

Environmental Permits and Authorisations (Scotland)

General controls for invasive plants

- Biosecurity Plan to be implemented where relevant
- Cordon off affected areas and buffer zones as required
- Display suitable warning signage
- Communicate requirements via site induction
- Inform relevant operatives regarding access and machinery restrictions / cordoned areas (to prevent spread via tracks or wheels)
- Maintain records and plans of invasive species location, removal / treatment methods and long-term monitoring / control requirements - communicate this to the client where relevant
- An approval may be required from the relevant environmental regulator for use of herbicides near watercourses (including rivers, streams, canals, reservoirs, lakes, ponds, drainage channels and dry ditches)
- Contact the relevant statutory authority for nature if the invasive plant is in a designated or protected site (e.g. SSSI, LNR etc.)
- Ensure invasive plant controls and management methods are included in relevant risk assessments and method statements
- Where invasive plants are disposed of off-site, ensure relevant waste management requirements are implemented
- Ensure wheels / tracks of plant and machinery working in areas contaminated by invasive plants are cleaned on exit (containing any debris / run-off)
- Invasive plants or materials contaminated by invasive plants must be stored / stockpiled on protected, impermeable surfaces to prevent spread
- Avoid double-handling of invasive plant species / contaminated material to reduce risk of spreading
- It may be possible to dispose of invasive plants or soils containing invasive plant material on site by burying if relevant waste exemption requirements are met
- Burning of invasive plant material on ■ sites is **not permitted** regardless of the content of RPS 178 and the SEPA Technical Note

Biosecurity Guidance

Signage available via TradeDirect

Using pesticides and herbicides near water

Checking for Protected Sites and Ecology

SHEMS-STD-GR-065
Waste Management

Biosecurity Guidance


RPS 178: Treatment and disposal of non-native plants

SEPA: Japanese knotweed Technical Note

Environmental Guidance Note



Invasive Plants

Common Invasive Plants

The [GB Non-Native Species Secretariat \(NNSS\) website](#) contains various resources for identifying and managing invasive plants. Further information is given in the table below for the most common invasive plants relevant to  sites and activities.

Using pesticides and herbicides near water

SHEMS-STD-GR-065
Waste Management

	Invasive Plant	Identification and Impact	Management	Disposal
ON LAND	Giant hogweed	Identification Sheet The sap from the stems and leaves can cause severe irritation to skin in the presence of sunlight.	Management Information Long-term control with herbicide or cutting prior to seeding (risk assessment must take account of hazardous sap - strimming or flailing is NOT RECOMMENDED)	Disposal at authorised waste facility in accordance with waste management requirements. If landfilled, requires burial at depth (contact landfill site). Waste vegetation is non-hazardous waste (EWC 20 02 01) and soil containing seeds / roots is also non-hazardous waste providing there is no other contamination (EWC 17 05 04). Possible on-site burial with relevant authorisations. Japanese knotweed impacted soils may require encapsulation / barrier membrane. No burning on  sites.
	Japanese knotweed	Identification Sheet The root systems can cause damage to concrete and asphalt structures and extends up to 7m from plants. Out-competes native plant species in ecologically sensitive areas.	Management Information Long-term control with herbicide or physical removal via excavation (up to 3m depth). Root barrier options available.	
	Himalayan balsam	Identification Sheet Out-competes native plant species in ecologically sensitive areas. Spreads easily via scattering seeds.	Management Information Manual removal (mechanical or by hand) of plants prior to seeding (2-3 years), excavation of soils containing seeds, use of herbicide.	
IN WATER	Floating pennywort	Identification Sheet Can out-compete native species by blocking out light in watercourses.	Management Information Regular cutting May-October, with immediate removal of cut material from the water followed by hand pulling or spot chemical treatment.	Disposal at authorised waste facility in accordance with waste management requirements. Waste vegetation is non-hazardous waste (EWC 20 02 01) and soil containing seeds / roots is also non-hazardous waste providing there is no other contamination (EWC 17 05 04). No burning on  sites.
	Water fern	Identification Sheet Out-competes native species by forming a dense covering on the surface of the water, blocking out light and deoxygenating the water.	Management Information Manual removal with net or boom before spores are released (at the beginning of winter, or once dense mats have formed).	
	Parrot's feather	Identification Sheet Causes flooding by blocking watercourses and drainage channels and can displace native species.	Management Information Regular cutting with immediate removal of cut material from the water followed by hand pulling.	
	New Zealand pygmyweed	Identification Sheet Forms dense mats that can cause flooding by impeding drainage and displaces native species.	Management Information Regular pulling, early treatment is recommended. Herbicides can be used in winter months but will cause damage to other species so should only be used in extreme cases.	
	Water primrose	Identification Sheet Causes severe impacts including out-competing native species and clogging waterways.	Management Information Early removal is essential. All plant fragments and roots should be removed. Regular clearing may be required.	

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Invasive Plants

Further Resources

Ecological Surveys

Checking for protected sites
and ecology

Trees and hedgerows
including works in
Conservation Areas

Reptiles and Amphibians

Badgers

Nesting Birds

Habitat enhancement

European Protected Species

Authorised by: Group HSW Director	Page 3 of 3	SHEMS-GUI-GR-062d
Author: Environment Team	Version Date: April 2023	Version 2.0
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