

# INVASIVE WEEDS: IDENTIFICATION, SURVEYS & TREATMENT

Failure to control invasive plant species can cause ecological disruption, damage to property and potentially lead to prosecution. The key to controlling such liability is early identification and management.

## Invasive Weeds

Numerous non native plants have been introduced to the UK, without becoming a problem. However, some in the absence of predatory species have become invasive, being faster growing, bigger or more aggressive than native species. Three of the most invasive species are;

- Japanese Knotweed
- Giant Hogweed
- Himalayan Balsam

Such species have spread rapidly and are typically found along transport routes, water courses and waste ground. Exploiting their ability to survive in nutrient poor soils and, in the absence of control measures, they are able to rapidly colonise extensive areas, shrouding out indigenous species and reducing ecological diversity.

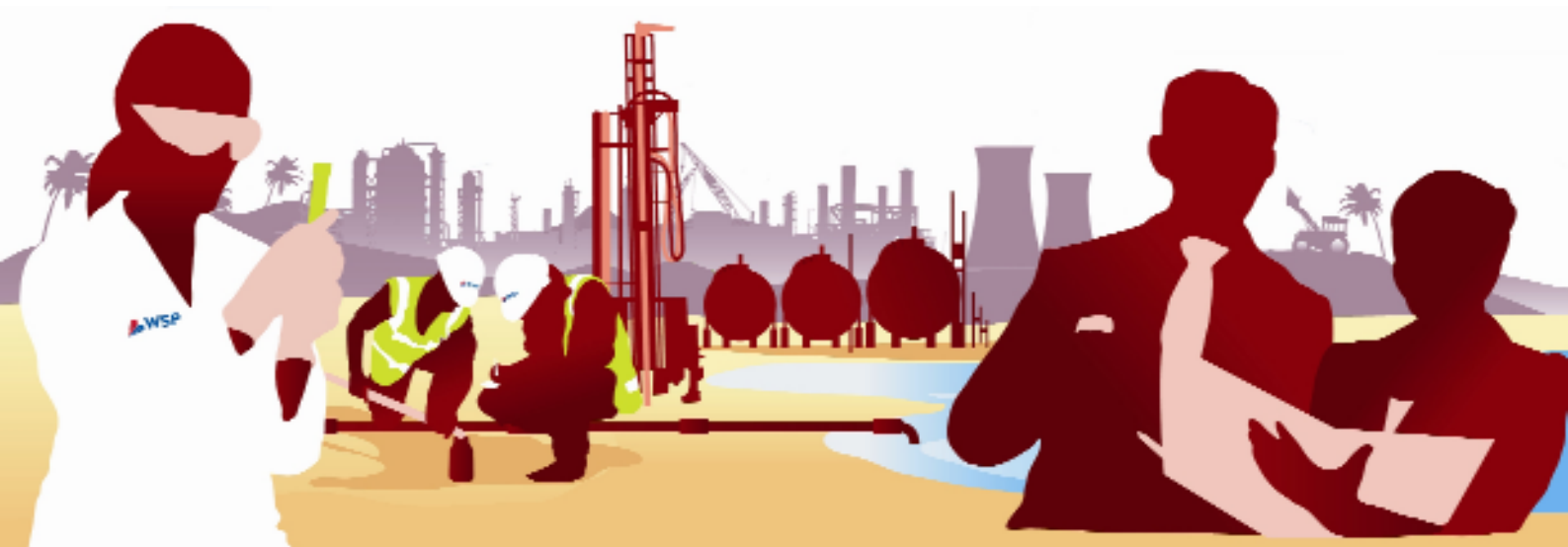
## Legal Context

Japanese Knotweed & Giant Hogweed are listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981), making it an offence to plant, or cause these species to spread in the wild. Disposal of waste containing these species is controlled under Part II of the Environmental Protection Act (1990) and materials must be disposed as controlled waste.

Whilst it is not an offence to allow these species to grow on your land, failure to prevent spread to a neighbouring property may render the offending landowner subject to a civil action for nuisance. The Environmental Liability Directive (2008) also places a duty on landowners to proactively ensure that their site does not cause damage.

The presence of Giant Hogweed exposes a landowner to a potential liability - contact with the sap may cause blistering and burns. Its presence in public areas may render footpaths and amenity areas unusable.

“ It's so nice to deal with someone that has their head screwed on properly. Any worked well with us, was open to our suggestions on the approach to take on site, and yet thorough in the examination of the ground materials. **Balfour Beatty** ”





## Invasive Weeds: Identification, Surveys & Treatment

WSP possess a wide range of invasive weed capabilities, from initial identification through to derivation of management plans, regulatory agreement and implementation of solutions. Early identification of invasive weeds is essential to avoid potential damage to structures, human health, ecology and to minimise costs associated with repair, management and potential loss of amenity.

We have assisted a wide range of clients including developers, academic institutions, property managers, utility companies and local authorities, delivering pro-active site specific solutions.

Land infested with Japanese Knotweed is accepted by HMRC as "land in a contaminated state" for the purposes of land remediation relief. We are pleased to advise on land remediation relief and assist in collation of a claim.

### Identifying & Surveying

Our experts in the fields of ecology and remediation undertake preliminary identification and accurate surveys using GPS technologies. This information is utilised to determine appropriate strategies to manage and address the issues caused by invasive species.

We review the available options to determine a site specific solution and where applicable will agree the strategy with relevant stakeholders prior to carrying out management or treatment.

### Treatment

Works are delivered in line with the Environment Agency code of practice. Where time is not a constraint, the application of herbicide may represent the optimal solution. Herbicide treatments are undertaken by in-house qualified staff, each of whom holds a "certificate of competence in the safe use of pesticides". Where a more rapid solution is required, excavation can be undertaken. Close supervision by a WSP specialist will ensure that the volume requiring management will be minimised. Subject to site requirements, these materials can be relocated to less sensitive areas for burial or ongoing treatment, or removed from site.

## So, let's talk . . .

We have a range of specialists to support you in this area, but lets start here.

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