



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 can be 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>
Northern Ireland 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.</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 and birds and mammals.</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 (where feasible).
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 keep; breed; transport to or from Northern Ireland to or from any place within Great Britain, or within Northern Ireland, (except where such transportation is of species to facilities in the context of eradication); place on the market; use or exchange; grow or cultivate; (including in a contained holding); or release into the environment. - ID sheet developed and deployed to border staff – Border Force, Portal Inspectors (DAERA), Plant Health Inspectorate (DAERA/FS), etc.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liaison with Wildlife Crime Northern Ireland (PAWNI) to ensure species is not being traded.
<p>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://invasivespeciesireland.com/what-can-i-do/check-clean-dry/;) Be Plant Wise (https://invasivespeciesireland.com/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 and land owners are permitted to keep plants of this species which are already growing on their land. They must act responsibly and not allow or encourage it or its seed to spread outside their land-holding. Owners should consider safely removing and disposing of any plant covered by the IAS Regulation by composting or burning. - Guidance is provided in the Northern Ireland version of the Horticultural Code of Practice at: http://invasivespeciesireland.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Horticulture-Code-Final.pdf
<p>Early detection and rapid response</p>	
<p>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 Ireland website - http://invasivespeciesireland.com/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. Records are verified by Vice County Recorders. - The Biological Records Centre (www.brc.ac.uk) collects presence records of all wildlife species in the UK through a network of voluntary recorders. 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/). - Wildlife recording Apps are available which allow users to report sightings of invasive plants.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevant Government agencies such as DfI Roads/Rivers, AFBI, Loughs Agency, Forest Service and Northern Ireland Environment Agency record the presence of non-native invasive species when they are encountered as a part of their work. - All NI Councils to also record and report presence of non-native invasive species on their estates. - Non-Governmental Organisations (e.g. Rivers and Fishery Trusts and Boards, Wildlife Trusts, etc.) undertake surveys of freshwater habitats and report incidental sightings of non-native invasive species.
Rapid response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In certain areas of Northern Ireland, 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. 	
Research	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No known current research. 	

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