



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

**Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)**

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

*Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*

<b>Giant hogweed <i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i></b>	
<b>Description</b>	Giant hogweed is native to the western Caucasus region of Eurasia. It is a tall (usually 3 - 5m), biennial or perennial herbaceous plant with several hundred small white flowers in large umbrella-like flower heads up to 500mm across.
<b>NI Status</b>	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>	It was introduced deliberately into parks and demesnes in the 19th Century as an ornamental and has escaped into the wild. Spreads solely by seeds, mainly through wind dispersal and in water courses. 20-50,000 viable seeds a year from each plant can be dispersed over short distances by wind but considerably longer distances by rivers and streams.
<b>Aim</b>	To contain and reduce the extent of giant hogweed 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>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i> to avoid further spread.</li> <li>2. Eradicate small populations of <i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</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>- Giant hogweed 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 wild.</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="http://invasivespeciesireland.com/what-can-i-do/check-clean-dry/">http://invasivespeciesireland.com/what-can-i-do/check-clean-dry/</a>); Be Plant Wise (<a href="http://invasivespeciesireland.com/what-can-i-do/be-plant-wise/">http://invasivespeciesireland.com/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 giant hogweed to spread. They must initiate management measures to remove it from their land. Owners should consider the safe removal and disposal of this plant. When in seed 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="http://invasivespeciesireland.com/report-sighting/">http://invasivespeciesireland.com/report-sighting/</a>. Entering a record generates an email to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Invasive Species 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://www.brc.ac.uk/iRecord">iRecord</a> online or by the <a href="http://www.brc.ac.uk/iRecord">iRecord</a> app. 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 giant hogweed is not yet widespread within a catchment it must be managed to reduce its impacts and to avoid further spread.</li> <li>- Due to the health &amp; safety risks, physical control can sometimes be difficult. Tap rooting and removing early season may be effective for small infestations but must be carried out before it has produced its flowering spike.</li> <li>- Herbicide may be appropriate provided carried out by PA6Aw qualified operatives if adjacent to water.</li> <li>- Guidance on the management of giant hogweed is available on the Invasive Species Ireland website - <a href="http://invasivespeciesireland.com/species-accounts/established/terrestrial/giant-hogweed">http://invasivespeciesireland.com/species-accounts/established/terrestrial/giant-hogweed</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Research</b>	
<p>Apart from the use of grazing animals, no other biological control method has yet been developed. Further study of potential biocontrol agents is required to clarify whether or not there is some chance of their successful use in control.</p>	

Photo © RPS Group plc



For further information:

Northern Ireland Environment Agency  
Biodiversity and Conservation Science Unit  
Klondyke Building  
Cromac Avenue  
Gasworks Business Park  
Belfast  
BT7 2JA

Tel: 028 9056 9558

Email: [invasivespecies@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:invasivespecies@daera-ni.gov.uk)

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)



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

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)



**INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE**