



**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</b> <i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>	
<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, Upper and Lower Bann, Ballinderry River etc.
<b>Pathways</b>	It was introduced into parks and demesnes in the 19th Century as an ornamental and has escaped into the wild. Spreads solely by seeds, mainly through deliberate planting, 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, where possible, 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 health &amp; safety when working in proximity to giant hogweed</li> <li>2. To avoid further spread, avoid disturbing when seeds are viable.</li> <li>3. Eradicate small populations of giant hogweed locally, where feasible, prioritising especially vulnerable/high value sites and sites where access for works or anglers is required.</li> <li>4. 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).</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, as well as Article 15 (2) of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, 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 - unless there are specific exemption or permit.</li> <li>- ID sheet developed and deployed to border staff - Border Force, Portal Inspectors and Plant Health Inspectorate (FS), etc.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Stakeholder communications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to raise public and other stakeholder awareness of non-native invasive 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 or encourage giant hogweed to spread. Owners should be aware that to consider safely removing and disposing of this plant it is classified as 'controlled waste' &amp; must be removed to a licensed landfill</li> <li>- Guidance is provided in the Horticultural Code of Practice <a href="https://invasivespeciesireland.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Horticulture-Code-Final.pdf">https://invasivespeciesireland.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Horticulture-Code-Final.pdf</a> ;</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>- Wildlife recording Apps are available which allow users to report sightings of invasive plants.</li> <li>- Relevant Government agencies such as the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, DfI Roads/Rivers, AFBI, Forest Service &amp;, Loughs Agency record the presence of non-native invasive species when they are encountered as a part of their work.</li> <li>- Non-Governmental Organisations (e.g. Rivers and Fishery Trusts, Angling Clubs and Boards, Wildlife Trusts, etc.) undertake surveys of freshwater habitats and report incidental sightings of non-native invasive species.</li> <li>- All NI Councils to also record and report presence of non-native invasive species on their estates.</li> </ul>

<b>Rapid response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In certain areas of NI 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 should be managed to reduce its impacts and contain it, where feasible.</li> <li>- Due to the health &amp; safety risks, physical control can sometimes be difficult. Tap rooting and removing early season may, however, 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> </ul>	
<b>Research</b>	
<p>Further study of potential biocontrol agents is required to clarify whether or not there is some chance of their successful use in control.</p>	

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