

Injurious weeds and Invasive Non Native species: Guidance Note

Injurious weeds

There are 5 injurious weeds specified on the Weeds Act 1959 these are:

- Common Ragwort *Senecio jacobae*
- Curled Dock *Rumex crispus*
- Broad leafed dock *Rumex obtusifolius*
- Spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*
- Creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*

Due to the toxicity of Ragwort it can be more problematic than other species listed in the Weeds Act. The following guidance is focussed on Ragwort.

Who is responsible?

Responsibility to prevent and control the spread of Ragwort rests with the occupier of the land on which the ragwort is growing.

The Weeds Act 1959 gives Welsh Ministers the statutory powers of enforcement. If satisfied that injurious weeds are growing upon any land, Welsh Ministers may serve a notice requiring the occupier to take action in order to prevent the spread of those weeds. Any unreasonable failure to comply with a notice is an offence.

What can you do?

- Where Ragwort is growing on private land, complaints can be addressed to the Welsh Government divisional office at: Sarn Mynach, Llandudno Junction, Conwy, LL31 9RZ. Tel: 0300 062 5004. Opening hours: Monday - Friday, 9:00 - 16:30
The Rural Inspectorate in Wales gives priority to investigating complaints where there is a risk of injurious (harmful) weeds spreading to land used for grazing horses or livestock, land used for forage production and other agricultural activities.
- Where Ragwort is growing on Flintshire County Council owned or managed land it can be reported to us on 01352 701234. Ragwort control on Flintshire County Council owned or managed land is on a risk and resource assessment basis.

Invasive Non Native Species

There are many non-native species in our environment. They may have arrived through natural processes or through deliberate or unintentional release by humans. Most of these species cause no problems but some do. We call these Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS). INNS are a substantial environmental and economic threat as they can:

- Prey on native species
- Out-compete native species for food and shelter
- Spread disease
- Interfere with the genetic integrity (DNA) of native species.

Every year, it costs around £125 million to tackle INNS in Wales. Invasive non native species are listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) Part 1 (Animals) Part 2 (Plants)¹

Of the plant species listed under the Schedule 9 of the WCA which can be most problematic and we come into contact with most often are: Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed, Giant hogweed, Australian Swamp Stonecrop/New Zealand Pigmyweed, Japanese rose

Who is responsible?

Responsibility to prevent the spread of invasive non native species rests with the occupier of the land on which the INNS are growing.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) is the principal legislation dealing with non-native species.

Section 14 of the WCA makes it illegal;

- to release or allow to escape into the wild any animal which is not ordinarily resident in Great Britain and is not a regular visitor to Great Britain in a wild state, or is listed in Schedule 9 to the Act.
- to plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild any plant listed in Schedule 9 to the Act.

These offences carry a maximum penalty of a £5,000 fine and/or 6 months imprisonment. Guidance on Section 14 of the WCA gives further information. Here you can also find a list of species in Schedule 9 of the WCA for England and Wales.

What can you do?

Where INNS are suspected, please record it on the regional INNS website

<http://www.dinns.org.uk/en/get-involved/submit-a-record.aspx>

Where INNS are growing on Flintshire County Council it can be reported to the council. Flintshire will endeavour to undertake appropriate control measures, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- The species
- The likely success of any operations;
- The likelihood of re-invasion;
- Any existing eradication programmes

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69>

- The costs of the operations, including any potential future costs associated with ongoing control.

Where INNS are growing on private land. It should be reported to the landowner at first instance. In the event of a landowner not complying. Flintshire Council will seek to secure control. When deciding whether to pursue this course of action Flintshire County Council will take the following factors into account

- The species
- The likely success of any operations;
- The likelihood of re-invasion;
- Any existing eradication programmes
- The costs of the operations, including any potential future costs associated with ongoing control.
- If the action is an effective use of resources

Specific enquiries relating to plant freshwater or terrestrial invasive non native species can be addressed to the Welsh Government office at. Plant Health and Environment Protection Branch. Welsh Government, Rhodfa Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, SY23 3UR.
planthealth@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Useful Information

Dee INNS is a team based in the North Wales Wildlife Trust who deal with all invasive species issues within the catchment of the river Dee. Visit the Dee Invasive Non-Native Species Projects website <http://www.dinns.org.uk/en/default.aspx> North Wales Wildlife Trust, 2/3 Griffiths Square, Mold, CH, Telephone: 07880197942.

The non native species secretariat provides tools and information to deal with non native species <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/home/index.cfm>

Guidance on section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69205/wildlife-countryside-act.pdf

