ENVIRONET NEWS

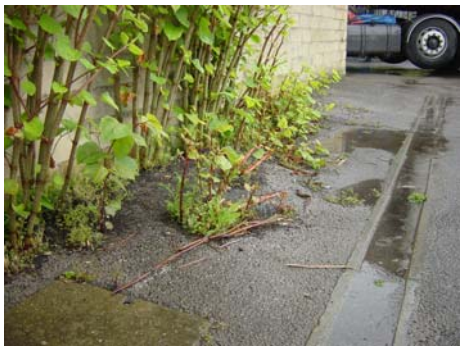
The electronic newsletter for improved environmental and health & safety performance

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT - ERADICATION OF JAPANESE KNOTWEED

Research shows only 68% of property professionals are aware of the liabilities associated with Japanese Knotweed. If you're not one of them you should note that Japanese Knotweed has the potential to be a greater barrier to development than contaminated land.

This special supplement has been produced to increase your awareness of the problem and to let you know help is at hand with our "in situ" guaranteed eradication method.

Japanese Knotweed is a highly invasive plant, can cause extensive damage to property, and on development sites can delay the construction process by up to a year or more.



Japanese knotweed growing through tarmac and damaging wall and foundations to building.

The plant has an extensive rhizome system extending some 7m laterally from the visible plant and up to 3m deep. You get spectacular spread of the plant by disturbing the soil, as fragments of rhizome weighing less than 1 gram will regenerate into new infestations, growing to a height of around 3m in only one growing season.

Excavated Japanese knotweed rhizome showing new growth.

As a result knotweed infestations are increasingly found throughout the UK, Europe and America, and without any natural predators, the problem is escalating to the extent that DEFRA now estimate the cost of eradication within the UK to be between £1.5 - 2.6 billion.

The plant is listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, making it an offence to cause or allow the plant to spread in the wild.

All parts of the plant, and any soil contaminated with the rhizome, are classified as "controlled waste" requiring all the "duty of care" requirements under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to be met.

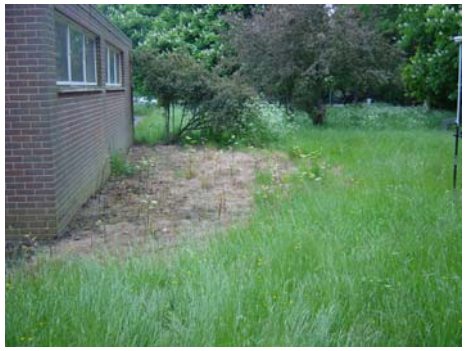
In the past "dig and dump" methods have been used, where the infested soil is excavated and disposed of in landfill sites. Due to the potential 7m lateral spread and 3m depth of the rhizome this results in considerable quantities of material being exported from site, which at a cost of £100/m^3 is prohibitive. This method does not always solve the problem, especially where knotweed grows near site boundaries.

Standard herbicide techniques can take 3 years of repeat treatment, and even then viable rhizome may well exist. Re-growth often occurs because the treatment does not destroy all rhizome.

For developers, the "dig and dump" or standard herbicide treatment methods are certainly less than ideal.

Environet has been working since 1998 to devise a solution that is cost effective, environmentally sound, and quick.

In 2005 Environet carried out some 40 eradication projects, totalling around 10,000 sq m and has been offering guaranteed nationwide eradication (subject to certain conditions) since October 2004 using the Environet tcm HIT method.



Typical re-growth following standard herbicide application. Note scorched area with new knotweed shoots

The HIT method is an "in situ" combination treatment method which takes typically 16 weeks during the growing season (April - September). It costs less than 10% of the equivalent "dig and dump" cost. It is arguably the best environmental option, since it avoids excavating, transporting and disposing of vast quantities of infested soils, and uses less pesticide than tradition herbicidal methods.

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Specialists in the control and eradication of Japanese Knotweed

HOW TO IDENTIFY KNOTWEED ……..

Once you've encountered knotweed, you won't forget it - for those who haven't this is what it looks like!

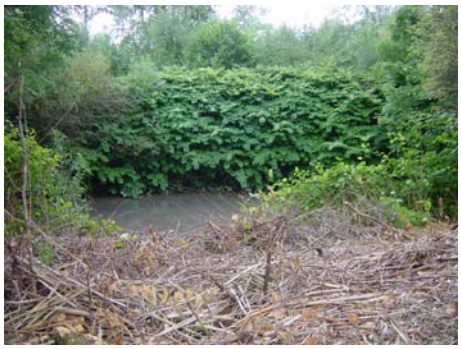
Brittle bamboo like with hollow stalks up to about 3m tall during winter dormancy period.

New shoots in spring with reddish tinge on leaf, with main shoots resembling asparagus

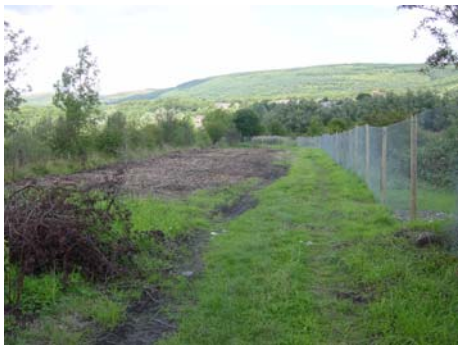
May/June - rapidly growing with distinctive green leaf, growing up to 3m in height by end of year

August/Sept - white flowers

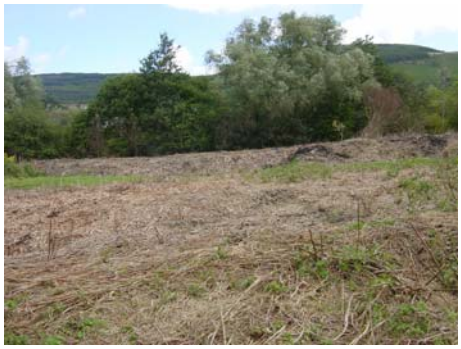
THIS IS WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE AFTER TREATMENT BY US!



Untreated knotweed beyond river - treated knotweed in foreground.



Treatment approaching completion showing dead knotweed to left of perimeter fence.



Treatment complete - no re-growth apparent - rhizome viability tests confirm successful eradication

ADVICE ON WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A JAPANESE KNOTWEED PROBLEM

DO NOT:

Disturb any ground within 7m of any visible knotweed

Cut down, or attempt to pull up knotweed

Move knotweed infested soil into areas not already infested with knotweed

Spread live knotweed vegetation to areas not already infested with knotweed

Move plant or equipment from infested areas without thoroughly cleaning off all infested material first using a high pressure water cleaner, ensuring effluent runs to an already infested area

Take any infested soil or knotweed vegetation off site unless by a registered waste carrier, and with appropriate "Duty of Care" Transfer Note identifying the waste as infested with knotweed

DO:

Familiarise yourselves with the extent of the knotweed infestation on site

Prevent unauthorised access within 7m of any visible knotweed

Seek professional help as early as possible - costs can escalate for accelerated eradication programmes.

Environet Consulting Ltd

33 Leigh Hill Rd, Cobham, Surrey KT11 2HU

Tel (+44) (0)1932 868700
Fax (+44) (0)1932 863157
E mail: contact@environet-uk.co.uk