

Giant Hogweed Eradication Project for the River Tyne East Lothian

There are 3 main species of plants which are considered to be non native on our riverside banks and each can be very invasive and push out other diverse plant life.



Japanese Knotweed

This plant is easy to recognise in mature clumps in the photo above but as a new or small plant is quite difficult to spot among other vegetation. It will spread by seed but mainly from the rhizomes that make up it's roots structure. These bits break off in river floods and travel downstream and re-establish a new infestation.

This can be killed by spraying with Roundup in Spring and then again in Autumn to allow the chemical to be drawn down into the root structure. This kind of treatment needs to be carried out possibly for several years to completely eliminate the clump. Other times we have seen a single season treatment work effectively.



Himalayan Balsam

Himalayan Balsam is a seemingly innocent kind of riverside plant with rather pretty pink flowers but there is no doubt that it can and will spread easily being able to project its seeds up to 4 metres and will given the chance quickly become very invasive in the riverside bank.

This plant can be killed by spraying with Roundup in Spring on an annual basis to cover new plants which will emerge from seed.

Giant Hogweed



This is the target plant for 2019 and most people will have seen these very large “Triffid” like plants. Each stem is capable of producing around 10000 seeds each so you can see that allowing it to flower is fatal to the success of the programme. Assuming that we allow no plants to flower then the new plants we see are growing from seeds already in the soil seed bank.

It will take around 5 to 6 years for the majority of these seeds to germinate .

For this reason it is **vital that no plant is allowed to flower.**

Where stock have access to the riverside grazings they will often eat the plants and assist in the prevention of flowering but for most East Lothian arable farmers the effective way to kill this plant is to spray with Roundup in Spring around late March or May before the plant reaches a height of 600mm.

Where you suspect you may have a lot of plants it is worth walking over the area as soon as plants reach the size of a large dinner plate around March and then having a second walk through in May to pick up any missed plants or any late germinators.

Take a walk around again in late June and spray any plants with Roundup.

If the plant has a flowering shoot and bud, please decapitate the flowering head from the stem using a spade, separating it from the stem as there is enough sap in the stem to allow the head to finish flowering again. DO NOT USE A POWER TOOL as the sap can inflict a nasty burn.

Please be careful to wear gloves and do not touch the plants with direct skin as the sap is very capable of giving a very serious skin burn

For individual plants it is quite practical to just cut the plant below soil level with a spade lift the plant and leave to die but for speed it is easier to use a knapsack sprayer with Roundup.

On this 12 mile of stretch of river from Haddington to the sea at Dunbar, while we are all signed up to eradicate Giant Hogweed, it is important to know that all other Riparian owners in our river section are doing this at the same time.

My role as Project Coordinator is to monitor whether we are all doing this properly and point out any areas that have been missed. I will be assisted by the Path wardens in the task.

As we go round this first year, starting in spring 2019, we will spray all the Giant Hogweeds but I have pointed out these other two invasive species so that as it suits you may wish to spray them on the way past. In some areas there are no Japanese Knotweed and others no Himalayan Balsam so decide for yourself which of these other species you wish to deal with rather than wait 5 years and say well maybe I could have given them a quick spray on the way round from the beginning.

On the Whittingehame Biel water Hogweed eradication project we are now dealing with Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed as the Balsam has moved into the space given up by Giant Hogweed.

When we started we had a river with Giant Hogweed plants touching each other along much of the 7 mile river bank length so we had a lot of Giant Hogweed to spray and by this cooperative approach have virtually removed all giant Hogweed from the river.

The key element for our success was the co-operation of everyone along the length of the entire river doing their bit.

It is my intention to arrange a meeting in early 2019 to which all the Tyne riparian owners will be invited to outline the project and introduce myself and the path wardens to you.

Look forward to seeing you there.

In the meantime if you have any questions please call me on 07836246858 or by email to james.wyllie@ruchlawproduce.co.uk

James Wyllie

Tyne Hogweed Co-ordinator

On behalf of East Lothian Countryside Volunteers