

# **Toolbox talk - Environment**

# NetworkRail

# **Toolbox talk - Environment**

Title:

Site:

Given by:

# Japanese knotweed

## What?

- ☐ Japanese Knotweed was originally introduced to the UK as an ornamental plant, but has spread extensively in the wild
- ☐ it grows rapidly more than 20 mm a day, it forms dense clumps over 3 m high, which crowd out and prevent the growth of native plants
- □ the rhizome root system, from which new plants grow, can extend several metres away from the original plant and be up to 2  $\mbox{\ensuremath{m}}$
- ☐ the plant spreads so rapidly not only through progression of its root system, but because any fragments of its stem or root will grow to form a new plant (a piece as small as 0.8 grams can regenerate) making it very difficult to eradicate
- ☐ grows in any type of soil no matter how poor and is often found along railways, river-banks, roads and particularly on derelict sites
- □ can grow through joints in tarmac and mortar and disrupt infrastructure.

## Identification

- ☐ forms dense clumps and grows up to 3 m tall
- □ the stem is hollow, it looks like bamboo and breaks easily
- ☐ in spring it is fleshy and red tinged and in summer it is green with purple speckles
- ☐ leaves in spring are pinky red and uncurl as the stem grows
- □ in summer leaves become large oval or heart shaped midgreen
- ☐ flowers are cream coloured and appear in drooping clusters towards the end of August
- ☐ the plant dies before November often leaving behind the upright brown, hollow, woody stems.

## Why?

- □ avoid environmental harm: it shades out native plants by producing a dense canopy of leaves early in the growing season. Although not toxic to humans or animals, it offers a poor habitat for insects, birds and mammals
- $\hfill\Box$  avoid prosecution: it is illegal "to plant or otherwise encourage" the growth of Japanese Knotweed. This could include cutting the plant or roots and disturbing or moving surrounding soil that may contain root material unless as part of an eradication process
- □ avoid structural damage: the plant is strong enough to grow through foundations, walls, roads and drainage pipework.

# **Ouestions**

- 1 Why is Japanese Knotweed a problem in the UK?
- 2 Where is Japanese Knotweed on this site?
- 3 What can be done to stop Japanese Knotweed spreading?

### x excavate or move any soil from within 7 m of a Japanese Knotweed plant without instruction

- double handle material suspected on containing Japanese Knotweed, but if this is unavoidable do so on an impermeable surface
- \* stockpile material suspected to containing Japanese Knotweed within 10 m of watercourses, gullies or drains
- \* track plant through Japanese Knotweed it will cause it to spread.





# Don't

**Do** 

senter an identified area of Japanese Knotweed during treatment

✓ **IMMEDIATELY** stop all work within 7 m of the suspect plant

and contact a line manager for instructions if it is thought

✓ inform a line manager if you notice damage to the fencing

Japanese Knotweed has been identified

enclosing Japanese Knotweed.

Developed from W045 Environmental Toolbox talks Date issued: November 2015

Name	Company	Signature

Date: