



Fermanagh & Omagh  
District Council

Comhairle Ceantair  
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

# Invasive Alien Species ID Swatch



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© Paul Beckwith BWW

This Invasive Alien Species ID Swatch was produced by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council through the 'Aliens on the Lough' Project, supported by the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership through funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

For further species information and identification materials visit [www.invasivespeciesireland.com](http://www.invasivespeciesireland.com) or [www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org)

If you suspect you have seen one of these, or any other Invasive Alien Species, enter details online at [www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI](http://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI)

This booklet is available online and in alternative formats; please contact [biodiversity@fermanaghomagh.com](mailto:biodiversity@fermanaghomagh.com)



# Japanese Knotweed

(*Fallopia japonica*)

**Habitat:** Common in urban areas, particularly on waste land, railways, roadsides and riverbanks.

**Identifying Features:** High (to 3m) bank-side plant with hollow mottled stems that grows into dense thickets. Leaves are heart shaped with cream flowers in loose clusters. It spreads by rhizome or stalk, not by seed, so by cutting and moving this plant, it will regrow elsewhere.



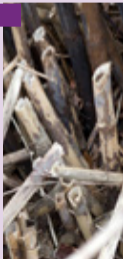
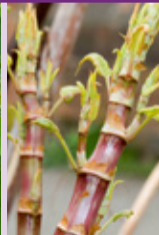
## Impact of the species

- Excludes native species
- Dies back in winter leaving soil vulnerable to erosion

## Next steps

- It is illegal to cause or allow to grow under the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 - **Do not cut**
- You may need to seek professional advice on how to treat - **Stop the Spread and Be Plant Wise**

© GBNNSS



# Giant Hogweed

*(Heracleum mantegazzianum)*

**Habitat:** Widespread, most common on riverbanks where seeds spread easily. Produces between 30,000 and 50,000 viable seeds per year.

**Identifying Features:** Easy to identify when fully grown by height, size of leaves and size of flowers. Tall plant (to 5m) with hollow red spotted stems and large umbrella shaped, white flower head. Leaves 1.5m wide and sharply divided.

**Warning - DO NOT TOUCH** - can cause painful rashes and other skin complaints.



© RPS Group PLC



## Impact of the species

- Harmful to humans due to toxic sap making the skin sensitive to UV light
- Can lead to closure of public amenity areas
- Excludes native species
- Dies back in winter leaving soil vulnerable to erosion

## Next steps

- It is illegal to actively cause or allow to grow under the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985
  - **Do not cut**
- Seek professional advice on how to treat
  - **Stop the Spread and Be Plant Wise**
- One of the non-native invasive species now listed as a 'Species of Union Concern'

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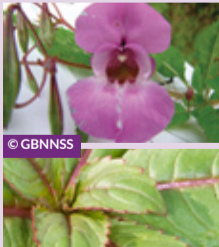


# Himalayan Balsam

(*Impatiens glandulifera*)

**Habitat:** Found mostly on riverbanks and in damp woodland, can grow in damp habitats.

**Identifying Features:** A tall annual herb with explosive seed heads. Easy to identify as a mature plant with its pink-purple flowers, fleshy stem and characteristic leaves. The seedlings and last year's dead stems are more difficult to spot.



## Impact of the species

- Excludes native species which leaves riverbanks exposed to erosion in the winter
- Subsequent potential sedimentation impact on fish spawning areas
- Attracts pollinating insects away from native species
- Increased risk of flooding due to siltation of water courses and bank instability

## Next steps

- It is illegal to cause or allow to grow under the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985
- One of the non-native invasive species now listed as a 'Species of Union Concern'
- Can be manually pulled or cut prior to the formation of the seed pods which explode at the slightest disturbance when ripe





# American Skunk Cabbage

(*Lysichiton americanus*)

**Habitat:** It grows in swamp forests and associated wetlands, fens, wet meadows, bogs as well as along streams, riverbanks, lakes and ponds.

**Identifying Features:** Yellow flowers are produced in spring that resemble those of wild arum (lords-and-ladies). They emit a strong odour like a skunk. The plant has a basal rosette of stemmed leathery leaves. It is a tall herb growing up to 1.5m in height. Green berries are produced in the summer. Its seeds disperse via waterways but also probably by birds and animals.



© GBNNS



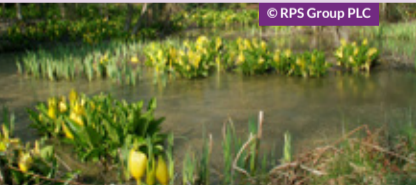
## Impact of the species

- Its leaves build dense layers of vegetation that exclude all light and render the water beneath devoid of life
- Problematic in damp woodlands where rarer mosses and lichens are out competed for light

## Next steps

- It is illegal to cause or allow to grow under the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985
- One of the non-native invasive species now listed as a 'Species of Union Concern'
- Seek professional advice on how to treat – **Stop the Spread and Be Plant Wise**

© RPS Group PLC



# Chilean Rhubarb

(*Gunnera tinctoria*)

**Habitat:** Damp grassland, woodland and shaded areas near water.

**Identifying Features:** Large clump-forming perennial with stout horizontal stems known as rhizomes, massive umbrella-sized leaves and stems up to 2-3m tall. Resembles larger version of the common rhubarb with a hairy appearance on the leaves and it spreads via underground rhizomes.



© RPS Group PLC



## Impact of the species

- Excludes native species by blocking out light
- In winter when it dies back it leaves slopes vulnerable to erosion
- Potential sediment impact on fish spawning areas

## Next steps

- It is illegal to cause or allow to grow under the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985
- One of the non-native invasive species now listed as a 'Species of Union Concern'
- Seek professional advice on how to treat – **Stop the Spread and Be Plant Wise**

© RPS Group PLC



# Curly Waterweed

(*Lagarosiphon major*)

**Habitat:** Standing waters such as lakes.

**Identifying Features:** An aquatic plant which can grow up to 3 m completely submerged under the water in chalk, gravel and clay pits, lakes, reservoirs and canals.

Leaves are strongly curved and whorled around the stem though are spirally arranged on the lower part of stem.

© RPS Group PLC



## Impact of the species

- Clog water bodies
- Exclude native species
- Impact on water based recreational activities
- Tangles in engine propellers inhibiting free movement

## Next steps

- It is illegal to cause or allow to grow under the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985
- One of the non-native invasive species now listed as a 'Species of Union Concern'
- **Check, Clean, Dry**
- **Stop the Spread and Be Plant Wise**

© RPS Group PLC



# New Zealand Flatworm

(*Arthurdendyus triangulates*)

**Habitat:** Still and slowly flowing water.

**Identifying Features:** This flatworm is very distinctive with a dark, purplish-brown upper surface with a narrow, pale buff spotted edge and pale buff underside. Many tiny eyes. Pointed at both ends, and ribbon-flat. A mature flatworm at rest is about 1 cm wide and 6 cm long but when extended can be 20 cm long and proportionally narrower.



## Impact of the species

- Excludes native earthworms
- Negative impact on wildlife species that are dependent on earthworms
- Localised negative effect on soil structure which leads to poor soil drainage

## Next steps

- It is illegal to release or allow to escape under the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985
- One of the non-native invasive species now listed as a 'Species of Union Concern'
- Seek professional advice on how to treat – **Stop The Spread**





# Grey Squirrel

(*Sciurus carolinensis*)

**Habitat:** The species preferred habitat is mature woodlands with a diverse understory however the species is also common in planted forests and urban areas.

**Identifying Features:** The grey squirrel is a larger squirrel than the native red squirrel. It has a distinctive long bushy tail and characteristic short front legs. Colouration is known to vary with some specimens displaying 'chestnut' markings on paws, hips and face which can lead to misidentification.



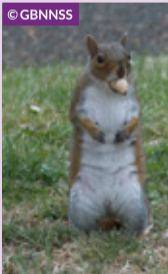
## Impact of the species

- Out-competes red squirrels for food as eats it earlier in the season before it is ripe
- Carries the Parapox virus to which red squirrels are not immune to and can be fatal if red squirrels contract it
- Damages trees by chewing on the bark

## Next steps

- It is illegal to release or allow to escape under the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985
- One of the non-native invasive species now listed as a 'Species of Union Concern'
- Contact your local red squirrel group for advice and local information on red squirrel distribution

© GBNNSS



# Nuttall's Waterweed

(*Elodea nuttallii*)

**Habitat:** Still or slow-flowing, shallow or deep water.

**Identifying Features:** Leaves are in whorls of three and are often recurved. Nuttall's waterweed gradually narrows to tip spread by fragments. Canadian waterweed is another type of the elodea species, like Nuttall's waterweed.

© GBNNS with thanks to  
British Waterways



## Impact of the species

- Clogs water bodies
- Excludes native species
- Prevents free casting for anglers
- Tangles in engine propellers inhibiting free movement

## Next steps

- It is illegal to release or allow to escape under the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985
- One of the non-native invasive species now listed as a 'Species of Union Concern'
- Seek professional advice on how to treat – **Stop The Spread and Be Plant Wise**

# Zebra Mussel

(*Dreissena polymorpha*)

**Habitat:** Slow rivers, canals, docks, lakes, reservoirs and sometimes water pipes and cooling systems.

**Identifying Features:** Zebra Mussels average out to about 30mm in length and form dense clusters on hard surfaces. They have a distinct striped colouration and shape. They can be found in freshwater and brackish waters and they are able to move between water bodies on boat hulls, fishing equipment and ballast water.



## Impact of the species

- They block out pipes and clog engines and cooling systems
- Form dense clusters on native mussels
- Cause toxic algal bloom which impacts on drinking water
- Mask the natural response to eutrophication

## Next steps

- It is illegal to release or allow to escape under the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985
- Seek professional advice on how to treat – **Stop The Spread and Clean, Check, Dry**

© Paul Beckwith BWW



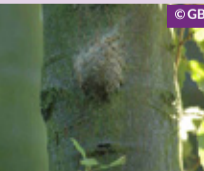
# Oak Processionary Moth

(*Thaumetopoea processionea*)

**Habitat:** OPM is an established pest on oak trees in London and surrounding areas, but most of the UK including Northern Ireland is designated as a Protected Zone and free from the pest.

**Identifying Features:** Have a distinctive habit of moving in nose-to-tail processions. Live and feed almost exclusively on oak trees. They can sometimes be seen processing across the ground between oak trees and will usually only affect other broad-leaved tree species if they run short of oak leaves to eat.

© GBNNSS



## Impact of the species

- Large populations can strip oak trees bare, leaving them vulnerable to other pests and diseases
- Older caterpillars develop tiny hairs that can cause itching skin rashes, eye irritations, sore throats, breathing difficulties and, rarely, allergic reactions in people and animals
- The risk of exposure to these hairs is highest in May and June

## Next steps

- Report your sighting immediately online at <https://www.treecheck.net/> and to DAERA
- Do not touch or let children or animals touch or approach OPM nests or caterpillars
- See a doctor if you think you or someone in your care has had a serious allergic reaction - tell the doctor you suspect OPM contact

© Henry Kuppen





# Asian Hornet

(*Vespa velutina*)

**Habitat:** It may be seen in flowers, soil, timber and fruit, especially those of foreign import. It will actively seek out beehives.

**Identifying Features:** Key features are the almost entirely dark abdomen, except for the 4th segment which is totally yellow. Makes very large distinctive nests, secondary ones often in tall but primary can be found in eaves of buildings.

© Gilles San Martin



[cabi.org/isc/datasheet/109164](http://cabi.org/isc/datasheet/109164)



## Impact of the species

- An invasive non-native hornet, originally from Asia
- It is a highly aggressive predator of our native insects, especially honeybees and other pollinators
- Cooperation of the public to report possible sightings is vital to **Stop The Spread**

## Next steps

- Report your sighting immediately
  - Download the Asian Hornet Watch App at major App Stores
  - Telephone NIEA Non Native Invasive Species Team on: 028 9056 9629
  - Submit a record via CEDaR online recording: [www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI](http://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI)

