

Guidance on the Control of Japanese Knotweed in Guernsey (Home and Garden Situation)

Recent UK trials (Jones et al, 2018) have concluded that glyphosate based herbicides give the best control when applied to Japanese Knotweed (JKW) between June and October. This is when JKW is actively, producing more rhizomes and will direct the herbicide downwards into the plants roots better than in the spring when transport systems within the plant favour new top growth away from the roots.

Dos and Don'ts

Do not strim or chop JKW as this creates small fragments that can root and spread the problem.

Do not move soil contaminated with JKW as this will just spread the problem.

Do not fly-tip or place any JKW in household or green waste as it will spread the problem.

Do not pull JKW unless you can dispose of it safely. Pulling can tear pieces of the crown out which are very persistent and difficult to kill by composting, drying or burning.

Do start treating JKW as soon as you see it and keep at it till it's gone. This may take several years.

Do, wherever possible dispose of JKW on the infected site (details below). Moving them to another site will increase the risk of initiating new infestations.

Do, ensure that any herbicides are used safely and responsibly.

Cutting & Disposal

There may be situations where herbicides cannot be used e.g. near water or livestock.

In such cases regular cutting can eventually give control but may take many years.

Cut the individual stems at ground level e.g. with a knife, secateurs or shears. Collect the stems and dry them on a polythene sheet, or similar, to prevent rooting until they are dark brown before burning in situ if practical and will not cause a nuisance.

Where burning is not possible the cut stems can be placed fresh or dried in strong black polythene sacks to compost. To ensure that no live plant material escapes use two plastic sacks one inside the other.

Use & Choice of herbicide

Before spraying with any herbicide check that you are complying with The Prevention of Pollution (Guernsey) Law 1989 (see below).

For best results, treat between late May and October and cut and safely dispose of any old JKW canes from the previous season before application. Ensure the leaves are well covered on both sides with the spray as long as it is safe to do so.

ALWAYS READ THE PRODUCT LABEL FIRST, FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS AND USE ANY PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT SPECIFIED.

Alternatively a professionally trained contractor could be engaged to treat the problem.

Types of Herbicide

1. Glyphosate:

Glyphosate is a total weed control product so will kill all plants in an area and should not be used near any you wish to keep.

There are several different formulations of Glyphosate available but **Roundup Tree Stump & Root Killer** is an example of a product that has a recommendation for knotweed control. As a spray it is easiest to apply when the plants are 0.5 – 1m. This is usually late May / early June. Another treatment late August – October should then be applied. Single treatments will not give total control and you should plan to treat for at least 3-4 years in both spring and autumn.

If the stand of JKW is very tall when you first come to treat it can be cut back first then the regrowth treated at 0.5-1m height.

Roundup Tree Stump and Root Killer also has a recommendation as an autumn stem treatment to mature stems.

2. Triclopyr, 2,4-D/Dicamba/MCPA/Mecoprop-P

These herbicides are selective, only killing broad leaved plants and can be used without killing plants like grasses. Check the relevant product detail for its approved uses, number of applications permitted and application method.

These active ingredients form the basis of several selective weed killer products for lawns. If small knotweed plants are present in lawns then the use of these products may give some control.

As with glyphosate repeated applications will be needed over several years.

Safe use of Pesticides

At the time of writing Guernsey Water have identified vulnerable areas which are high risk of pollution to the to the water catchment of the island as “stream banks, ponds, wet meadows, marshy areas, douits, drainage ditches, underground culverts or paved areas”. Pesticide applications must be at least 3m away from a vulnerable area. This can be reduced to 1m if weed-wiper or gel applications are being used. (The Prevention of Pollution (Guernsey) Law 1989). See <http://www.water.gg/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=108839&p=0> for further details

For further advice contact Guernsey water on 239500 or www.water.gg

For more general advice contact The States Analyst Laboratory on 707612.

References

‘Optimising physiochemical control of invasive Japanese knotweed’: Jones, D., Bruce, G., Fowler, M.S. et al. Biol Invasions (2018) 20: 2091

‘Japanese Knotweed Guidance for Identification & Control’: Cornwall Knotweed Forum (Undated).