

JKC NEWS

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WELCOME

The Japanese knotweed growing season is upon us again and, as we will explain in our newsletter, this year's UK infestation could be on an unprecedented scale. In this issue we'll try to give you some useful advice on how to reduce the threat on your own sites, explain the very latest techniques being used to tackle the problem, and bring you up to date with Japanese Knotweed Control's current developments in this sector.



Early action is the key

With stringent legislation now covering the handling and disposal of knotweed, the Environment Agency's new code of practice also spells out the importance of early action; a planned timetable for the treatment of knotweed on development sites.



The earlier Japanese knotweed can be identified on a site, the quicker developers can assess and cost the options for destroying, disposing of and managing it, as well as potentially negotiate an appropriate reduction in the purchase price of the land.

It's also important to agree and implement a treatment plan as soon as possible as this again significantly reduces the chances of knotweed spreading or growing back.

The earlier Japanese knotweed can be identified on a site, the quicker developers can assess the options.

Developers should plan to minimise the amount of Japanese knotweed they have to excavate and should make sure they have allocated enough time within the project to implement the treatment plan, even phasing the development if necessary to allow more time to treat the problem.

For details of the new Code of Practice go to www.environment-agency.gov.ukcommondata/acrobat/japnkot_1_a_1463

The tale of the errant JCB

The estimated cost for UK landowners and developers to eradicate Japanese knotweed is some £2 billion and within the construction industry, for example, it is responsible for holding up major regeneration projects and adding millions to development costs.

But whilst there's little a developer can do to avoid having an existing infestation on a new site, there's plenty they can do to minimise its spread and disruption once that site has been earmarked for development.



Japanese Knotweed Control recently visited a major new construction project in Manchester, a large site earmarked for a commercial development. Unfortunately, before we arrived, a JCB had been busy at work, excavating huge swathes of the site with devastating consequences. A localised Japanese knotweed infestation had been uprooted and spread across most of the site and given the speed and frequency with which the weed reproduces itself, dense clumps were now growing throughout the site.

A JCB had been busy at work, whilst excavating huge swathes of the infestation with devastating consequences.

A treatment programme that would have incurred minimal cost and been completed within a few days, had immediately escalated into a problem that could take several months to resolve at huge cost.

Awareness is the key, a message driven home in the Environment Agency's new code of practice for managing Japanese knotweed on development sites. It stresses how managing land in a timely and appropriate way can avoid not just excessive cost and disruption but potentially prosecution and other compensation claims.

A treatment programme would have incurred a minimal cost and been completed within a few days.

Implementing a Japanese knotweed management plan and designating a clerk of works to oversee it, is a good way of ensuring contractors treat it in an appropriate manner, but making sure all on-site staff – digger drivers included – are aware of and can identify knotweed rhizome, is another important step towards reducing the problem.

Please visit our newly updated website for more news & information at:

www.japaneseknotweedcontrol.com



Rooting out the cowboys

The scourge of Japanese knotweed infestations could reach epidemic levels this summer and the problem is being exacerbated by many of the companies being brought in to treat it. The current estimate of at least one serious infestation every 10km in England and Wales could escalate even further as a lack of industry regulation means many of the new entrants into the treatment market are untrained, under-qualified and simply not up to the job.

Although Japanese knotweed contamination is now much more widely recognised as a major problem, not least by developers, planners and local authorities, one unfortunate consequence is that everyone is suddenly an expert on how it should best be treated.

The reality is that many of the new entrants into the market simply don't have the necessary equipment, experience, qualifications or insurance cover to carry out the treatment work effectively.

Even when practiced by seasoned professionals, traditional treatment methods can be costly, time-consuming, not always 100% effective and carry some environmental risk. In the hands of inexperienced operators the problem becomes massive.

With minimal checks and safeguards apparently being made by the authorities, much of the responsibility unfortunately falls back to businesses to check the credentials of the so-called 'specialists' they are using. If they don't, they could be making matters on their own site much worse with serious financial and even legal implications.

Stockport pioneers new stem injection method

A year after becoming the first local authority in the country to use Japanese Knotweed Control's pioneering new stem injection treatment method, Stockport Council is gearing up for another summer onslaught on the Borough's continuing knotweed problem.

Following Japanese Knotweed Control's successful stem injection treatment on a number of sites, the council's parks and recreation team bought a pair of the new systems last year and used them virtually non-stop throughout the summer across its parks and public areas.

The way the stem injection method has solved the problem has been better than we could ever have imagined.

The executive councillor (lesisure) Shan Alexander, said: Reinforcing Stockport Council's strong environmental credentials, we are proud to be the first council in the country to use this new system and have been very pleased with the results.



One year on, the response has been even more positive. Henry Campbell-Ricketts, a senior officer within the service said: "The way the stem injection method has solved the problem has been better than we could ever have imagined. Stockport Council is confident it has now found a solution that can get rid of Japanese knotweed with just one treatment and will continue to use Japanese Knotweed Control in areas that are time critical and ecologically sensitive."

Export success

Japanese Knotweed Control's sister company, Stem Injection Systems (Europe) continues its international expansion securing a number of new European export orders including the Swiss government, France, Spain and Poland.

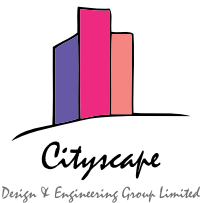


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