

Removal of Japanese Knotweed

Removal by excavating/burning

As an individual, you do not need permission from the Environmental Agency / Natural Resources Wales, however; you must inform your local council to ensure burning is allowed and contact the Fire Brigade on the day of burning to advise them of the fire.

0370 606 0699.

(You will need an environmental permit or registered waste exemption if you are a business)

If you are a business you may carry out burning in the open with a registered exemption as described in the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010. The relevant exemption is D7 – Burning waste in the open.

The specific conditions of a D7 exemption are:

- The total quantity of waste burned over 24hours does not exceed 10 tonnes.
- The total quantity of waste stored at any one time does not exceed 20 tonnes.
- No waste is stored for longer than six months.

Key conditions

- The burning must take place on open land, not in an incinerator or a building.
- You should be careful to position the bonfire where it will not cause nuisance to neighbours through excessive smoke or odour.
- The burning must take place only at the place where the waste is produced.

As an individual you do not need an exemption but will still need to adhere to the conditions above.

You can use controlled burning of stem, rhizome and crown material as part of the programme to control Japanese knotweed. This means the material is less likely to survive and there is less material to bury or dispose of off-site. You cannot rely on burning alone to kill rhizome or crowns. In its native area, Japanese knotweed grows on volcanic ash and around hot fumaroles, so do not rely on heat treatment to completely kill it.

It is good practice to treat Japanese knotweed with Glyphosate at least two weeks before excavation. While carrying out the excavation, you should dig to a depth of at least 3m around the area of the rhizome and crowns. The depth may differ depending on site conditions. It is unlikely that any rhizome will be found below 3m unless it has been previously backfilled.

Rhizomes can grow up to 8m in any direction from the crowns; take this in account when calculating the excavation area.

As well as the rhizome and crowns the soil dug up should all be treated as contaminated waste and also must be burned.

Disposal of burned waste

Even after burning, the remains are still contaminated waste. Methods of dealing with the waste are:-

- Dispose of the remains with a licensed contractor. Do not attempt to transport any hazardous waste yourself without a licence/permit. You can have a specialised container brought to site for the waste to be stored in or have a contractor come and take the waste away themselves, either way the waste is signed over to the contractor with a chain of custody and the responsibility is off your hands.
- Burial of Japanese knotweed material and burnt remains of Japanese knotweed may be buried on the site where it was produced. The material should be covered with a root barrier heat sealed plastic membrane and then buried at least 5 metres deep with inert fill or topsoil. A fragment of Japanese Knotweed rhizome as small as 0.8 grams can remain viable and grow to form new stems, ensure all burial is done at least 8m away from any building or proposed building plots. If any re-growth occurs, carry out a treatment plan in the next season to ensure the crowns and rhizomes growth is stopped. The burial location should be clearly marked on all site plans. The Environment Agency will need to be advised that the burial of Japanese Knotweed is taking place and all plans must be approved by them.

Note: Even if the Japanese Knotweed has been removed from your property there is no guarantee that neighbouring land containing the Japanese Knotweed will not spread back into your land. It is an offence to allow the plant to spread into neighbouring land; however it is not uncommon for neighbouring land to be unclaimed or ownership to be unknown.