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## on-native Species

Facility managers responsible for grounds maintenance should make sure they are aware of any Non-native species, either flora or fauna, that may be present on their land. Non-native species are those that have established themselves outside of their natural location with the assistance of man either intentionally or unintentionally sometimes over thousands of years.

Sometimes these introductions have been deliberate, for social or economic reasons such as forestry, agriculture and horticulture, or sometimes by accident; for example, Dutch elm disease, which was introduced in imported timber. The introduction of Non-native species has risen sharply due to the increase in trade, transport, travel and tourism. World globalisation has offered species new pathways and increased opportunities to establish in new areas.

While most Non-native species are harmless or may be of benefit, some of them are invasive and can have significant environmental, economic and public health implications. Invasive non-native species have an impact on biodiversity by displacing or preying upon native species, by destroying habitats or by introducing new diseases or parasites. For example, water vole populations have declined as a direct result of the invasion of non-native mink.

One Non-native species of particular concern for land owners is the Japanese Knotweed. This is a strong-growing, clump-forming perennial plant, with 2-metre-tall purple flecked stems which are renewed each year from a dense network of vigorous underground roots. It was introduced from Japan in 1825 as an ornamental plant and is not unattractive but its rapid annual growth and relentless spread, allows it to easily overwhelm other garden plants.

Because it can aggressively overpower native plants it is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to cause Japanese knotweed to grow in the wild. Much of its spread is caused by topsoil movement or construction traffic from property works. Japanese knotweed is classed as 'controlled waste' under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and requires disposal at licensed landfill sites. Alternatively, it can be destroyed on site by allowing it to dry out before burning.

Other Non-native species requiring special action include the Asian Hornet, the South American Water Primrose and the Eastern European Killer Shrimp. Information on species to look out for and who to notify is provided by the Non-native Species Secretariat which has responsibility for coordinating the approach to invasive non-native species in Great Britain working with the relevant governments and agencies of England, Scotland and Wales.

*The Non-native Species Secretariat ID sheets can be found at [www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org) along with information on their strategy and risk analysis process.*