

What should I do if I already have invasive non-native species?

The bottom line is to 'Compost with care' (see right). In addition, follow these guidelines to help prevent invasive species in the wild:

- Dispose of plant matter responsibly by composting or using a local garden waste rubbish collection (not your normal bin collection). Many invasions in the countryside start as a result of people disposing of unwanted plants, but sometimes trying to remove the invasive species can make the situation worse if best practice is not followed.

- Clean your footwear after you've been managing your pond. Fragments can be transported in the tread of shoes and even a 5mm fragment of New Zealand pygmyweed (aka Australian stonecrop, *Crassula helmsii*) is sufficient to cause



an invasion of another waterbody. Therefore, if you take part in water activities like fishing or kayaking, clean boats and all equipment before transporting them from one waterbody to another.

- Don't give away excess problem plants from your pond, aquarium or garden to your friends. This will simply spread the problem to them, too.

Left: New Zealand pygmyweed, aka Australian stonecrop (*Crassula helmsii*)
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Compost with care

- NEVER release ANY garden or aquarium plants into the wild
- Don't tip them down land drains
- Don't dump them in the countryside
- Don't throw them into your normal waste bin

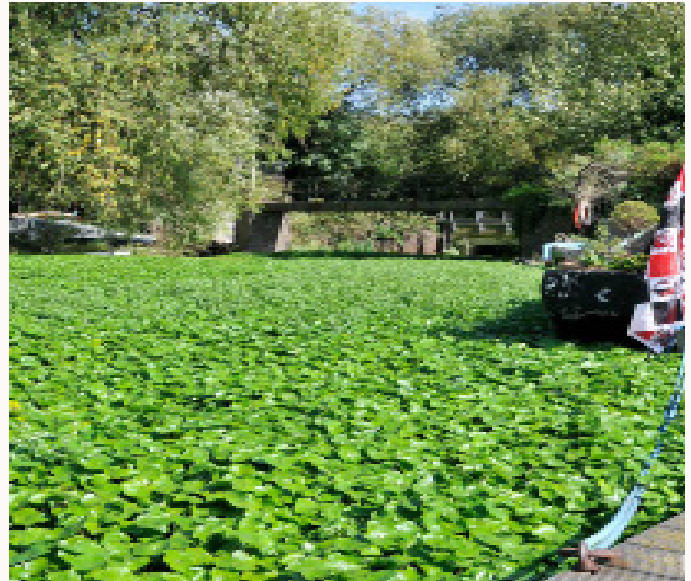
- For more information, see 'What's in your pot?'
http://www.plantlife.org.uk/publications/whats_in_your_pot



How should I remove invasive, non-native plants?

First read the Environment Agency's booklet, 'Managing Non-Native Plants', before carrying out any invasive removal work. It gives guidance on removing and disposing some of the most problematic invasives species including:

- Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*)
- Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)
- Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*)
- New Zealand pygmyweed, aka Australian swamp stonecrop (*Crassula helmsii*)
- Parrot's feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*)
- Floating pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*)
- Creeping water primrose (*Ludwigia peploides*)



Floating pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*)
© GB Non-native Species Strategy (GB NNSS)

Caution...

Before removing invasive plants...

- Do not trespass or remove plants from land or water that does not belong to you, without the consent of the landowner.
- On designated conservation sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), ask permission of the relevant statutory agency such as Natural England.
- Consult the Environment Agency if the invasive removal is extensive.
– call 08708 506506 or visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk

How to dispose of invasive species

If you do not dispose of plants appropriately, you may be committing an offence. It is also an offence to cause certain species of non-native plant to grow in the wild. For more information, read Plantlife's *Invasive plants and the law* pdf .

Some invasive species, including Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed, are controlled waste and must be disposed of properly at registered sites. So contact the Environment Agency for guidance. Also helpful are...

- The GB Non Native Species Secretariat, whose website provides advice on managing invasive species.
- The Scottish Government, which has produced a 'Code of Practice on Non-Native Species', developed to help people who manage land containing non-native plants and animals.

For more information, see 'Code of Practice on Non-Native Species'
<http://www.nonnativespecies.org//index.cfm?pageid=299>



Health and safety

When removing invasive plants by hand, always wear gloves. Special precautions and extra protective clothing are necessary for some species, such as giant hogweed and euphorbias, the sap of which can cause phytophotodermatitis (a blistering of the skin caused by a combination of the sap and exposure to sunlight).

The skin blisters 24–48 hours after exposure, and dense pigmentation is visible after three to five days. This may persist for six years or more. Cut material can also remain active for several hours after cutting.

For more information, see the Environment Agency 'Managing Non-Native Plants' booklet and the GB Non Native Species Secretariat (GB NNSS) website – visit www.nonnativespecies.org

Weil's disease

When working in or by ponds, take special care. Make sure the depth of the pond will not make work hazardous. Weil's disease, although uncommon, can be caught through contact with contaminated water in canals and non-flowing watercourses. Take preventative measures by...

- Covering cuts and abrasions with waterproof plasters.
- Wearing waterproof gloves.
- Avoiding dirty water entering your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Maintaining normal standards of hygiene – wash hands thoroughly with clean water before drinking, eating or smoking.

Pulling by hand

For most species, small infestations can be controlled through pulling by hand on a regular and ongoing basis, and this is considered the most environmentally friendly approach. But take care not to leave cut or pulled plants in fields with livestock, as some plants may be poisonous when eaten. For large infestations, however, use of herbicides may be necessary.



Always wear protective clothing when handling invasive species © Evgeniia/iStockphoto.com

Herbicides

Chemicals can be an effective means of controlling larger infestations of invasive plants, but Plantlife recommends manual alternatives whenever possible, particularly if the affected area is small. Before deciding to use a herbicide, we advise you to:

- Seek advice on the most appropriate herbicide to use. Note that some chemicals kill all vegetation they contact.
- Only use domestic proprietary brands of herbicide (certain herbicides should only be handled by a licensed professional).
- Always take proper safety precautions and read the product label beforehand.
- Plan carefully when to undertake the work. Consider the lifecycles of other wildlife. Some herbicides fail to work in wet conditions and outside the growing season.
- Be aware of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 1988 regulations.
- Consult the Environment Agency in England and Wales, and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency in Scotland if using herbicide in or around a waterbody or watercourse.

