

Return of the Dreaded Japanese Knotweed

Japanese knotweed, described by the Environment Agency as “indisputably the UK’s most aggressive, destructive and invasive plant”, can add significant costs to construction projects and cause delays. Don’t think it can be brushed under the metaphorical carpet as, when it returns, it can grow through asphalt and concrete, causing extensive damage to buildings.

Applying herbicide to knotweed is more likely to induce temporary dormancy rather than kill it, resulting in regrowth especially after the soils are disturbed. Whilst herbicide treatment is relatively cheap, it’s seldom the answer on development sites. Physical removal of the knotweed roots and rhizomes are preferred by property professionals who have fallen foul of knotweed in the past.

Dig & Dump involves the excavation and disposal of knotweed infested soils in landfill. It’s an extremely expensive exercise, and is referred to by the Environment Agency as the method of “last resort”.

In 100 tonnes of infested soil there will be approximately 1 tonne of knotweed material. Imagine if it was possible to separate the knotweed rhizome and roots from the soil so that the soil could be reused on site. That would surely provide huge economic and environmental benefits.

This is exactly what eco-innovative Environet UK Ltd has done, with their patented Xtract™ method. Since the method was launched in 2008, many developers and



Japanese knotweed in early Spring

construction companies have benefitted from the huge cost and time savings the method provides. The technique and patented equipment has been further refined over the years. Each removal is now offered with an insurance backed guarantee underwritten by a syndicate at A-rated Lloyd’s.

Xtract™ was featured in a programme entitled ‘Building Tomorrow’, introduced by national newsreader Natasha Kaplinsky and produced in partnership with ITN Productions and the Chartered Institute of Building. Visit www.environetuk.com/Video/Building-tomorrow-japanese-knotweed-film to view.

Spring is the time that the dreaded knotweed returns. If you identify it on a site seek professional advice at your earliest opportunity. **For further information visit www.environetuk.com or ring 01932 868 700.**