

HorticultureWeek

INCLUDING
Grower

Local authority uses stem injections to stop knotweed

By Rachel Sixsmith

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council is taking the lead in the fight against Japanese knotweed by becoming the first local authority to use a weed control method popular in the US.

The council is using the stem-injection treatment, which works by delivering a measured dose of herbicide directly into the centre of the plant rather than just on the surface.

Executive councillor for leisure Shan Alexander said: "We are proud to be the first council in the country to use the new system and we have been very pleased with the results. Our team has found this to be a much easier-to-use treatment method and more accurate in delivering the herbicide, killing only those plants we need to."

The council's parks and recreation team bought the equipment this summer at the start of the weed's growing season.

Since then it has successfully eradicated large swathes of knotweed at local nature reserve Galey Carrs and at Reddish Vale Country Park. Unlike spraying, which requires repeat visits, the weeds die instantly.

The system is being hailed in the US as an environmentally friendly



Effective: only one herbicide treatment is necessary to destroy the weed

alternative to traditional chemical spraying as it avoids drift spray, run-off or contamination.

Stockport's technical services manager Henry Campbell-Ricketts decided to enquire about the system after researching the method on the internet and discovered the kit was available from Stem Injection Systems (Europe), which is also based in Stockport.

He said: "It's a case of 'why didn't I think of that first'. I'd been thinking of injecting herbicides into

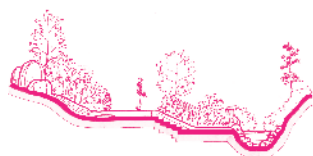
weeds for donkeys' years. I did a bit of research on the internet and was surprised to find that the UK supplier Stem Injection Systems was also based here."

Stem Injection Systems bought the rights to use the system in the UK earlier this year.

Stem Injection Systems joint managing director David Layland said: "In the US it is now the preferred method for states in the environmentally conscious West Coast."

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