PRESS RELEASE

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New method to be trialled in Wales for managing Japanese knotweed without the use of pesticides

North Wales Wildlife Trust (NWWT) is launching a pioneering trial of a new chemical-free method to eradicate Japanese knotweed, one of the UK's most damaging invasive species. The trial, taking place at Stori Brymbo, Wrexham from July 14, 2025, marks the first use in Wales of the Roots Reset technique.

The Wildlife Trusts in Wales are calling for the end or reduction of the use of pesticides, and as such, North Wales Wildlife Trust is leading the way with innovative management methods for managing Japanese knotweed, an invasive non-native species which is damaging to biodiversity, housing and infrastructure across the United Kingdom.

North Wales Wildlife Trust (NWWT) has initiated a new management approach for a Japanese knotweed eradication trial in Wales as part of the Wales Resilient Ecological Network Project (WaREN). WaREN supports organisations, Local Action Groups, and communities in their efforts to address invasive non-native species (INNS) across Wales. The trial is set to begin at Stori Brymbo, Wrexham on July 14th, 2025, and will last for five days, although the overall process will take 12 months to complete. A report will then be published and made available on the North Wales Wildlife Trust's website.

As invasive species rank among the top five threats to global biodiversity, finding an innovative, chemical-free approach enables NWWT to lead efforts in restoring nature. This new approach uses the Roots Reset method to control Japanese knotweed without pesticides or chemicals and promotes quicker natural regeneration and allows replanting to take place within 5 days. The Roots Reset technique does not involve pesticides and has been demonstrated to eradicate Japanese knotweed within a year. Traditional methods using pesticides may take up to five years to achieve the same result. Roots Reset was previously deployed in the United Kingdom (Scotland), but this will be the first time the method is utilised in Wales.

This trial was developed following funding from Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water to discover innovative ways to manage invasive non-native species. NWWT consulted Soilwise about Roots Reset, a method designed to remove Japanese knotweed, while benefiting the environment. After the trial, NWWT will release a report comparing the effectiveness of the Roots Reset method with the traditional method of foliar spraying, as well as outlining the costs and timeframes for each approach. Additionally, a validation report will be produced by Dr. Daniel Jones, a leading UK expert on Japanese knotweed.

The Roots Reset method was originally developed by the Dutch company Soilwise. This technique has been successfully implemented at over 325 sites across north-western Europe, achieving full elimination of Japanese knotweed in more than 95% of cases. Once the method is completed, native species can be planted in the treated area after just five days. This is a significant improvement compared to current best practices, which recommend waiting until the end of treatment—typically a minimum of five years—before planting. This delay is primarily due to concerns that soil disturbances could relocate rhizomes of any remaining Japanese knotweed.

If the trial of this method in North Wales proves successful, it will be validated by Dr. Daniel Jones, the UK lead on Japanese knotweed. Following validation, there is hope for broader implementation across the United Kingdom.

Benefits of using Roots Reset:

- Proven complete control of Japanese knotweed in one treatment
- No use of pesticides or chemicals,
- Environmentally friendly,
- Recovery of soil health and biodiversity above and below ground
- Low cost compared to other methods
- Applicable both in-situ and on excavated soil in-depot

Quote from Frances (NWWT CEO) - "We at North Wales Wildlife Trust are always striving for new and innovative ways of helping nature and tackling Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS). Roots Reset enables us to be at the forefront of INNS management without the use of pesticides. Allowing nature to recover without pesticides enhances biodiversity and natural regeneration more efficiently than conventional practices".

Quote from Matthijs Varekamp (Soilwise Japanese knotweed specialist):

"The solution is already in the soil. We developed a proprietary method to deploy microorganisms already present in the soil against invasive species. To do so, the soil is first enriched with a 100% plant-based granulate called CleaRoot, after which the soil is sealed oxygen-tight. CleaRoot feeds specific microbes already present in the soil. As a result, these grow rapidly and consume all available oxygen in the soil. In the absence of oxygen, further fermentation of the knotweed's roots takes place. As a rule, 100% of knotweed is killed in one treatment, and that without the use of chemicals or excavating the soil. We apply Roots Reset in close collaboration with contractors throughout North-West Europe. We look forward to deploying Roots Reset in Wales for the first time and introducing people in Wales and the surrounding areas to our innovative and effective control technique."

With invasive species being one of the top five threats to biodiversity across the planet, finding an innovative way of tackling this issue without pesticides or chemicals allows NWWT to lead the way for nature recovery.

Follow these links for more information on Soil Soilwise and Roots Reset and Roots Reset and NWWT.

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Note for editors

Images are available for one of use in this folder

Filming opportunities of the trial are available on the day with prior permission.

North Wales Wildlife Trust
North Wales Wildlife Trust is one of 46 Wildlife Trusts working across the UK. Part of a grassroots movement, we believe that we need nature and nature needs us. More than 900,000 members and 39,000 volunteers work together with their Wildlife Trust to make their local area wilder and make nature part of life, for everyone. With the invaluable support of our volunteers, we manage 35 nature reserves in North Wales. We also work with other organisations and landowners to protect and connect wildlife sites across the county and inspire local communities and young people to care for wildlife where they live. https://www.northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water is proud to support the wider Clwyd INNS project with NWWT and NWRT as it looks to tackle INNS at a catchment scale. This innovative section of the project is part of our broader commitment to nature-based solutions and the restoration of ecological resilience across Wales. By funding this project, we are helping to pioneer a pesticide-free approach to managing INNS — one of the most pressing threats to biodiversity. Our collaboration with NWWT and NWRT reflects our shared ambition to reduce reliance on pesticides like weedkillers and supports our Be PestSmart approach. Working in this way helps protect soil and habitat health, accelerates the recovery of native ecosystems, and safeguards our drinking water sources. We believe that investing in sustainable, science-led methods like Roots Reset is essential to building a more biodiverse and resilient future.
https://www.dwrcymru.com/en

Soilwise

The roots of Soilwise lie in the Wageningen agricultural science community. Our primary focus is to develop and market sustainable biobased solutions that improve soil health. We help landowners such as municipalities, provinces or states, ports, water boards, wildlife organisations, and land banks to naturally control invasives, such as Japanese knotweed. In addition, we want to support growers and arable farmers by restoring and improving their soils in a natural way. In this way they benefit from better growing crops and thus higher yields. We are originally an internationally oriented company, doing business around the world, from serving banana plantations in the Philippines to deploying Roots Reset across North-West Europe and beyond. https://www.soilwise.nl/en

Roots Reset

Roots Reset is a proven effective method for the complete and natural control of invasives such as Japanese knotweed. The added value of Roots Reset is twofold. By enriching the soil with our plant-based product CleaRoot and then covering it oxygen-tight, the roots of the harmful invasives break down. At the same time, the biodiversity of the soil recovers. Once the Roots Reset is complete, you can immediately apply new plantings. Roots Reset is patented and we deploy it in close cooperation with green contractors for landowners such as municipalities, provinces, railway managers, ports, water boards, property developers and soil depots. In recent years, we have succeeded with Roots Reset in completely controlling invasives at more than 200 sites in north-western Europe.

https://www.soilwise.nl/en/invasive-plant-control

Stori Brymbo

We inform, entertain, and educate. Preserving and promoting Brymbo's rich natural and industrial history. Through storytelling, regeneration and community-led projects we create a space where the past meets the future.

https://storibrymbo.co.uk/