

# QUICK GUIDE: WEED TREATMENT

Weed treatments are undertaken to prevent spread which can cause a lot of damage to hard surfaces. Some species of weed can be hazardous to the health of wildlife



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June 2023

## Weed Treatments

Weeds are controlled for the following reasons:

- Safety - weed growth can interfere with visibility for road users and obscure traffic signs. Weeds in kerbs or around drains can prevent or slow down drainage. Their growth on pavements may damage the surface, causing broken and uneven slabs.
- Structure - weed growth can destroy bituminous (asphalt) paving surfaces, force kerbs apart and crack walls, causing safety issues and greatly increasing our maintenance costs.

### What we treat

Weed treatments are undertaken along the kerb next to the road channel. Treatments are also carried out at the back of the pavement where a building or wall is present.

### What we don't do

We do not treat weeds at the back of the pavement where this is a verge/grassed area or in between slabs and blocks in paved area.

### Urban areas (large towns)

Suffolk Highways deliver 2 treatments per year with an additional localised treatment where harmful or noxious weeds are identified.

Suffolk County Councils facilities management contractor, Vertas will be undertaking weed treatments in Ipswich.

### Rural areas

Suffolk Highways do not carry out an annual weed treatment programme in rural areas. Where harmful or noxious weeds are identified, these will be treated on a site-specific basis.

More information can be found in the [Weed Control](#) page on our website

### When we treat

Treatments commence after the emergence of the 'spring weed flush' (when weeds start to grow and before they get the chance to seed). We monitor the forecast as rain can weaken the solution, reducing its effectiveness. Similarly, spraying during high winds will reduce the amount of chemical that comes into contact with the weed.

Therefore, the date can vary due to the weather, but generally treatments start in late April or early May and completed by the end of September.

### What type of treatment do we use and how long does it take to work?

From 2023 Glyphosate will no longer be used for any routine weed treatments.

For the 2023 season an acetic acid weed treatment will be used. These products are natural and licensed for use as herbicides on hard surfaces. Unlike glyphosate the treatment is not systemic (drawn down into the roots), but the effects of treatment are usually visible within 24 hours.

There may be a residual vinegar smell for a day or two after treatments.

Whilst acetic acid is low toxicity the concentration used in herbicides is higher than household vinegar and we advise avoiding contact with treated areas.

## Injurious and invasive non-native weeds

Suffolk Highways will deal with **injurious weeds** and invasive non-native within public highways - the [Weeds Act 1959](#) defines these to be:

- broad leaf dock
- common ragwort
- creeping or field thistle
- curled dock
- spear thistle
- Japanese knotweed
- giant hogweed

## What you can do

Landowners and occupiers are responsible for dealing with injurious and invasive weeds on their land.

Under section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it can be an offence to plant or grow certain specified plants in the wild, including Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed. There is no statutory requirement for landowners to remove these plants from their property, but it is an offence to allow them to spread to adjacent land.

Further information to help you identify and deal with these weeds can be found on the Gov.UK website at [Stop ragwort and other harmful weeds from spreading - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

If you identify an issue in the highway, such as an injurious or invasive weed, you can report this quickly and easily online using our [Highways Reporting Tool](#).