



Using herbicides in/near water

Frequently Asked Questions

C Hamilton, May 2015

This guidance note explains the difference between professional and amateur herbicide products, what products are approved for use in or near water and who can use them.

What products can I use in or near water?

The only active ingredient that is approved for use in or near water is “glyphosate” There are currently 89 formulations of glyphosate that can be used in or near water. The safest products are acknowledged as “Roundup Pro Biactive” or “Roundup Pro Bio”

What products can I use if Japanese knotweed is growing away from the water (more than 1m from top of bank)?

It is best practice to use a formulation containing the active ingredient glyphosate. There are other approved herbicides that will control knotweed but these can be more aggressive and have longer term effects on the environment.

Who can use them?

If you are spraying on the banks next to a waterbody or watercourse the following applies:

For treatment in a domestic property situation - you can buy “amateur products” from a DIY store and spray yourself following the guidance on the product label. No amateur products are approved for use in or near water.

For commercial treatment of knotweed growing on commercial premises - you must either hold an appropriate National Proficiency Test Council (NPTC) certificate of competence or appoint a contractor who has the relevant qualifications.

They will most likely use “professional products”. These are generally more effective. From November 2015, anyone using professional products will need a certificate of competence to apply them, even on their own property.

Do I require Environment Agency agreement to use herbicides in or near water?

You must hold the correct NPTC certification and contact the Environment Agency for our agreement (as per the product label) if spraying herbicides in or near a watercourse (within 1m of the bank top). This agreement is an AqHerb01 (approval) and can be found via the following link to the Gov.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-to-use-herbicides-in-or-near-water>

NB: Amateur projects do not have this requirement on the product label as they are not approved for use in the aquatic situation.

What is Glyphosate and how does it work?

Glyphosate is a non-selective, systemic herbicide. It will kill all green actively growing plants it comes into contact with and will be absorbed by the plants leaves and circulated inside the plant and down to the roots/rhizomes. Glyphosate is effective in controlling most weed species including knotweed, annuals, perennials and grasses in many situations. For more info, refer to the Environment Agency pages on the gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/prevent-the-spread-of-harmful-invasive-and-non-native-plants>



Japanese knotweed: Photo, GBNNSS