

ADVERTORIAL

A GROWING PROBLEM



AS CUSTOMER awareness of Japanese Knotweed continues to increase, the choice of a credible and reliable treatment contractor has never been more critical. For one Stockport-based company at the forefront of the industry, professionalism remains the watchword.

Its over a decade since Japanese Knotweed Control (JKC) launched its treatment company and in that time there has been a dramatic increase in knowledge and awareness of problems caused by invasive, non-native plants in both the commercial and, more recently, the domestic market.

But for a few specialist companies, and perhaps some construction companies and property developers that had seen their sites affected by the scourge of Japanese Knotweed, there was little understanding, less still concern, about this problem. Today, that is no longer the case.

Driven to some extent by scare-mongering press headlines about 'triffid-like' infestations, but also by more genuine examples of mortgage refusals and house sales falling through, Japanese Knotweed has emerged as a growing national problem. One unfortunate consequence is that everyone is suddenly an expert on how best it should be treated, even though too many new entrants into the

market simply don't have the necessary equipment, experience, qualifications and insurance cover to carry out treatment work effectively.

Unlike many traditional landscaping and weed control practices that opportunistically diversified into Japanese Knotweed treatment as a sideline practice, JKC was established specifically for this purpose and was, from the outset, determined to adopt a thoroughly professional approach. Every aspect of its business reflects an ongoing commitment to industry standard accreditations, legislative compliance, best practice training and development and full insurance-backed guarantees on its work.

JKC believes that, when choosing a treatment specialist, one critical consideration should be that a contractor is Amenity Assured and BACCS registered, which means they have the minimum requirements to work and preferably hold UKAS ISO 9001 accreditation. Another requirement should be some credible warranty backed insurance cover on all work undertaken. Inadequate insurance cover continues to undermine many treatment programmes with some guarantees at best misleading and at worst, not worth the paper they are written on.

JKC's commitment to professional

integrity has been continually tested by an increasingly competitive marketplace and the emergence of more and more 'cowboy' treatment companies, but it has, nevertheless, established itself at the forefront of its industry with a reputable, and growing, list of commercial clients in both the private and public sector as well as an increase in domestic customers.

Still operating from the same HQ offices in Reddish, Stockport, the company is now 10-strong and is involved in treatment programmes nationwide. Local authorities and housing associations are responsible for much of JKC's commercial treatment work and one such local client with which it has worked for a number of years is Tameside Borough Council based in Ashton Under Lyne.

Wherever Tameside Borough Council has a Japanese Knotweed outbreak on a new build development, or a site being refurbished, JKC is approached for a remediation proposal and a quote to treat the problem.

The recommended treatment programme depends largely on the budget, the timescale of the project and the extent to which the knotweed is impacting on surrounding areas. Over the years Tameside has used all the recognised treatment methods including excavation and removal from site, soil screening to remove the knotweed rhizome, chemical treatment such as foliar spraying, and the popular stem injection treatment method.

Lee Holland, head of environmental services at Tameside, has established a strong relationship with JKC: "We get a very good, cost-effective service from JKC with recommendations always bespoke to the specific challenges of each site. JKC's exclusive insurance-backed guarantee on all treatment programmes up to the value of £5million is also vitally important when it comes to customer reassurance and peace of mind." ■



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