

Reference Number: DAERA/26-270

**Northern Ireland Environment Agency**  
Natural Environment Division



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment  
an' Kintra Matthers**

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

Via [REDACTED]

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BT3 9ED

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E-mail: [invasivespecies@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:invasivespecies@daera-ni.gov.uk)

11 May 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

### **Environmental Information Regulation 2004**

With regard to your request for information received by the Department on 15 April 2026 which sought information relating to:

- The most commonly encountered toxic plant risks within managed land and natural environments
- Any recorded incidents, reports, or public safety concerns associated with plant exposure
- Any identifiable regional, ecological, or environmental patterns
- Mitigation measures in place, including signage, risk management strategies, or public safety guidance issued

I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm that any information you requested is publicly available and I have summarised its locations below:

There are a number of toxic plants that can occur on riverbanks and in riparian environments across Northern Ireland. The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) has produced a checklist of potentially harmful plants, which includes both native and

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non-native species (*A checklist of potentially harmful plants / RHS Gardening*). However, this list does not include some native species, such as Cowbane.

Hemlock water-dropwort is a native species and is widely present in riparian habitats throughout Northern Ireland. It is the most frequently encountered toxic species and likely presents the greatest risk. Any recorded locations of this species are publicly available on the NBN Atlas Northern Ireland and can be accessed by searching for the species at: <https://northernireland-species.nbnatlas.org/species/NBNSYS0000003693>

Giant hogweed, while often associated with risks to public health, is not toxic. It can be successfully grazed by sheep; however, it is dangerous to touch and can cause phytophotodermatitis in humans and some livestock. As with Hemlock water-dropwort, any records held by the Department are publicly available and mapped via the NBN Atlas Northern Ireland:

<https://northernireland-species.nbnatlas.org/species/NBNSYS0000003711>

Further information on Giant hogweed, including identification guidance and management advice, is available on the Invasive Species NI website:

<https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/species-accounts/established/terrestrial/giant-hogweed> A warning poster can also be downloaded from this page.

All records gathered by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) are shared with the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR), the National Biodiversity Network (NBN), and the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI). These records are accessible via CEDaR and NBN at:

<https://www.nationalmuseumsni.org/cedar> or <https://northernireland.nbnatlas.org/>

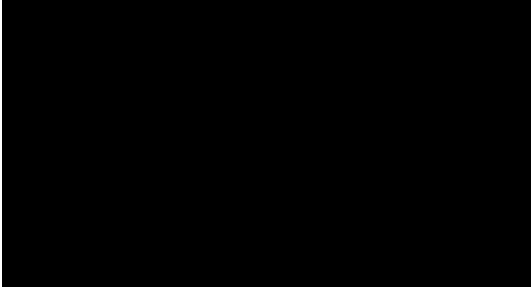
If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

If you are unhappy with the manner in which your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department. If you wish to do so, please contact The Review Section either by e-mailing [daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk) or by post at The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Data Protection & Information Management Branch, Floor 2, Jubilee House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, Limavady BT49 9HP, within two months from the date of this letter.

If after such an internal review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE SK9 5AF, who will undertake an independent review of the Department's decision.

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Yours sincerely,



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