

[Press release: Invasive species week: Floating pennywort a spreading menace](#)

Reports of floating pennywort in our rivers and lakes have reached a record high with 50 tonnes of the invasive plant being removed from the River Thames by the Environment Agency in 2017.

Fast-growing plants like floating pennywort can spread into the wild if they are not properly disposed of when removed from garden ponds. The [Be Plant Wise](#) campaign has handy tips for gardeners on how to prevent this from happening.

Lord Gardiner, the Biosecurity Minister, will see the effects of floating pennywort on Little Britain lake, Hillingdon, and hear about the work being carried out to prevent this plant from spreading further in the River Colne on Monday, 26 March 2018.

He will also see new signs being put up to encourage fishermen and boaters to [Check, Clean, Dry](#) their equipment and clothing to avoid spreading invasive species.

Biosecurity Minister, Lord Gardiner said:

Invasive species pose a real threat to our country's native plants and animals and cost the economy at least £1.8 billion a year.

The Check, Clean, Dry campaign is playing a key role in raising awareness of these threats – helping to prevent new arrivals and stopping the spread of invasive species already here. It is great to see the whole community of river users supporting this programme to protect the future of our precious native species.

As well as following the Check, Clean, Dry advice, people can help by reporting sightings of invasive plants through the [PlantTracker app](#).

Lord Gardiner's visit comes as part of a wider push by government to promote Invasive Species Week. The week is an annual awareness-raising campaign organised by the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNS) and Defra to get members of the public thinking about simple steps they can take to stop the spread of invasive species which threaten Britain's plants and animals.

Find out more on [non-native species](#).

Below are the themes for Invasive Species Week, which runs until 29 March 2018.

- Monday 26 March – Ornamental plants. [Be Plant Wise](#) and raising awareness of invasive plants.
- Tuesday 27 March – Hitchhikers. Information on the ways that recreational water users, field workers and anyone out in the countryside can help to prevent the spread of INNS, in particular promoting [Check Clean Dry](#).
- Wednesday 28 March – Exotic pets. Owners are asked to make sure they never release pets, or allow them to escape, into the wild.
- Thursday 29 March – #getINNSvolved – on the last day of Invasive Species Week tell us how you are getting #getINNSvolved.