



Tree Damage Alert No 122

AAIS • Alice Holt Lodge • Wrecclesham • Farnham • Surrey • GU10 4LH

Call the Tree Helpline on: 09065 161147

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18th Jan
2008

Favourite Plants to be Banned?

Defra is currently conducting a consultation process with the objective of reviewing Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The consultation documents include a proposal to prohibit within England and Wales the sale of some invasive non -native plant species. Among the species listed for inclusion is *Rhododendron ponticum*, which, we understand, continues to be used as a rootstock in the production of ornamental varieties. The proposal acknowledges that variants of *R. ponticum* and some hybrids are available from nurseries, but it does not give a view on whether or not they also will be included in a ban. There is some speculation circulating around tree buffs that the consultation process may suggest the inclusion of some important tree and shrub species including: False Acacia *Robinia pseudoacacia*, Sea Buckthorn *Hippophae rhamnoides* – a native (Bean) and Virginia creeper *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*. Holm oak *Quercus ilex* and species of *Cotoneaster* have also been cited as other invasive groups that should be included.

The sale of some species will be prohibited, and it will be an offence to cause or allow them to grow in the wild. In other words tipping material containing propagules, or allowing seed, for example, to blow will become a criminal offence!

Unfortunately the arboricultural industry is not well represented in the list of consultees about these changes. There is however still an opportunity for anybody to make comment using the consultation response form on www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/wca-schedule9 before the consultation period closes on 31st January 2008.

The consultation paper invites nomination of other species that should be considered for inclusion in the legislation. As it is unusual for a second consultation to occur who can tell what could be slipped into the list. It is important, therefore, that arboriculturists make their feelings felt loudly! ***Use the opportunity to comment now or lose these and possibly other valuable species.*** Also, your comments may result in the Arboricultural Industry being better represented on Defra's list of future consultees.

Harry Pepper, AAIS, Farnham.