

## Non-native invasive species & tree problems

The Park is regularly checked for the presence of non-native species such as Japanese Knotweed or Giant Hogweed and for tree problems such as ash dieback or acute oak decline.

### Non-native species

Along the railway rack, 150m east of the Mill railway bridge, there is a patch of Himalayan nutmeg. While non-native, this is not regarded as an invasive species, except in Australia and New Zealand; the specimen is probably a garden escapee. It is readily available in garden centres.



Recognition sheets for non-native invasive species can be found on the GB Non-native Species Projects Database: <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?sectionid=47>

If in doubt, take a photo on your smartphone and go to an app - there are several free ones. I use FlowerChecker - the image goes to a live botanist who replies usually within 24 hours, often faster.

The Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project have an ongoing campaign to eradicate critical species: <http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/planning-and-projects/river-stour-enhancement-project/non-native-invasive-plants-in-the-stour-valley-2/>. They give us regular advice. Neil Catchpole, one of their officers, regularly works with us every month. **Giant Hogweed** was identified last year within the Park; it was eliminated. The single site will be monitored over several years.

American **signal crayfish** are present in the New Cut, particularly around the weir. Native crayfish have almost certainly been eliminated from Suffolk as the invaders carry a fatal virus. There is no method of elimination. They eat anything they can find, sponges and insect larva which are significant to the ecology of our rivers. Live trapping without a licence is illegal. Mink are known to kill them, but individuals are quickly replaced from the tens of thousands of hidden juveniles.

There is a trapping programme for **mink** throughout the Stour valley basin. The presence of otters discourages them; there seems to be fewer sightings currently. They are known to kill ducklings and kingfisher young.

**Muntjac** may be sighted in the Park. They are essentially solitary specimens, unless with young. They are known to eat saplings. We do not as yet see the need to fence off areas as the Woodland Trust has had to do in many areas.

### Tree problems

Aside from our **regular tree survey** which identifies trees with potentially dangerous issues (such as the poplar trees that were felled last year, with rotten cores), we look for problems of infection or insect attack.

The Woodland Trust website outlines the main concerns: <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/tree-diseases-and-pests/key-threats/>



**Ash dieback** is present throughout Suffolk. Along the railway track it has been identified in young saplings, east of the Mill railway bridge. These have been removed as part of the scrub clearance programme. This will not eradicate the disease as it is air-borne but it may delay its transmission across the many ash trees in the park.

**Dutch Elm disease** is everywhere in the UK. In Clare it is visible in the Nuttery and around the Motte. Saplings grow up from the rootstock and perish after 20 years. The number of elms surviving past this period is steadily increasing across the UK; perhaps we will be lucky here.

*Note for residents: if such diseases are located on your own property, all parts of the infected tree, including leaves, should be burned. Do not place them in the brown bins.*

If in doubt, report the problem through our website or to the various interested parties. Even better, report the successes: hedgehogs, barn owls, grass snakes, otters, bats, butterflies, moths.....

Phil Gryce  
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