

What are we telling you about?

We will be carrying out routine cutting to embankments to control alexanders plants.

Where is this work happening?

At a number of sites on the Essex coast where the alexanders have spread and if left to spread further could reduce the resilience of the defence in the event of a large tidal flood.

When is this work happening?

We carry out at least two cuts a year in addition to our annual autumn seawall mowing. These additional cuts will be between March and July, before the plants set seed. Nesting bird surveys and active reptile mitigation are carried out prior to starting work and our operatives remain vigilant throughout.

What will we be doing?

Cutting areas of alexanders plants to discourage their growth and allow the typical grass cover to return. We will also be putting down seed to encourage the grass sward. To limit our impact on wildlife during these additional cuts, we will be targeting only alexanders. This can create a patchy appearance to the bank.

Why are we doing this work?

We have been seeing an increase in the spread of the alexanders on seawalls. The plant grows rapidly and shades out other vegetation, impacting biodiversity.

We encourage a healthy grass cover on defences as the roots provide strength to the soil to resist erosion. The shading caused by the alexanders kills off the grass, leaving bare earth when the alexanders dies back after flowering, which would reduce the strength of the defence during a large flood event.

We have trialled other methods of control, including herbicides on alexanders, however this has not been as successful in reducing the spread of alexanders and brings other risks to native wildlife and flora.

How will this work benefit you?

It will ensure the defences which protect the low lying areas of the Essex coast can withstand a large tidal surge and overtopping without a reduction in their strength and requiring the need for expensive repair.

How can you get involved or get in touch?

This information is to let you know about our vital work in your community. Please contact us if you would like to discuss this in more detail.

Contact

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*Alexanders Plant
(Smyrniolus atrum)*