

Spotlight on... Rhododendron!

What is Rhododendron?

Rhododendron ponticum is one of the worst invasive species in the U.K. (as well as throughout Europe and in New Zealand). Rhododendron is a dense shrub that grows up to 8m tall. It has waxy, elliptical/oblong, dark green leaves that grow up to 22cm in length and bright purple-pink flowers. It is evergreen, so it is visible all year round.

It is important to keep track of Rhododendron as it has significant negative effects. After Rhododendron invades an area, few native species will survive, due to Rhododendron outcompeting the native species for resources, primarily light.



Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*)

Rhododendron is covered by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is listed under Schedule 9 of the Act and Section 14 of the Act states that it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause the species to grow in the wild.

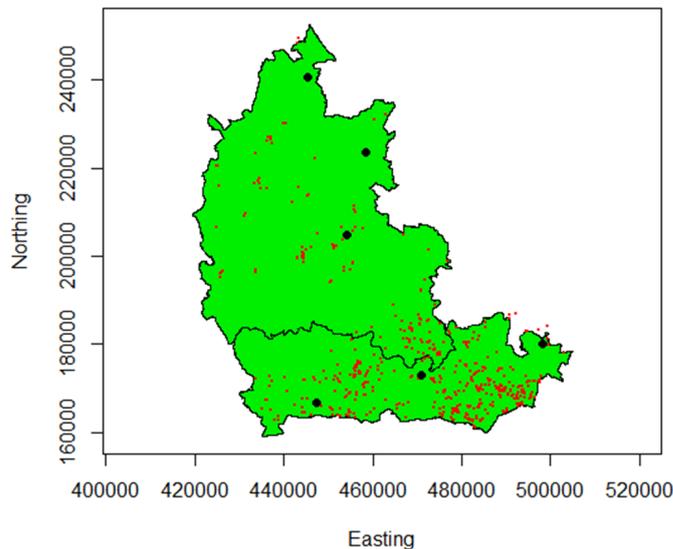
Identification help

Rhododendron is pretty easy to spot, and the excellent guide by the [GB Non Native Species Secretariat](#), it should allow for easy identification!

There is a useful app that is free to download called "PlantNet". PlantNet allows you to take a picture of the plant and it will attempt to identify it for you. This is not 100% accurate, so you should always double check with other ID guides, but it's often a good place to start in the identification of a difficult plant, and compare other app users' images of that species with your own specimen.

Where is Rhododendron?

According to our database, Rhododendron is found throughout Oxfordshire and Berkshire, but particularly in South East Berkshire. However, our database only includes information which people have provided to us (and we have collected), so a lack of records doesn't mean that Rhododendron aren't present in the area. All it means is that no-one has told TVERC they've spotted them... yet!



Have you seen any Rhododendron?

If you spot any wildlife when you're out and about, share your records with TVERC via our website <http://www.tverc.org/cms/content/share-your-records>. By letting TVERC know what you have seen you will help protect and improve your local environment by increasing the quality and quantity of data we hold. Absence records are also very useful, so also let us know if you've been out and haven't seen anything!

Your records can inform a variety of exciting biodiversity projects and help people make informed decisions about how to develop and manage land sustainably. We are a 'not for profit' organisation so rely on valuable help from skilled volunteers to improve our database.

Find out more

Check out the links below for more information on Rhododendron and how to identify it!

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/downloadDocument.cfm?id=71>

<http://www.brc.ac.uk/Plantatlas/index.php?q=plant/rhododendron-ponticum>

<https://species.nbnatlas.org/species/NBNSYS0000003888>

Tips for Recording

- Always make sure you have permission to be on the land, we'd love records from every spot, but please don't trespass!
- Rhododendron is easy to spot from a distance, so a pair of binoculars and a high vantage point would be a great start.
- Rhododendron flowers between May-June, so don't just look for the flowers, the leaves are also quite distinctive!
- Common on acid, peaty or sandy soils in woodland, heathland, rocky hillsides, river banks, gardens and parks.
- Make sure you wrap up warm, let someone know where you're going, and keep an eye on your surroundings – stay safe!