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Weed guidance raises concerns

Official guidance on dealing with Japanese knotweed is misguided and luring panic-stricken building developers into taking overly drastic action, an expert has warned.

Environmental consultancy Phlorum criticised the recently updated code of practice from the Environment Agency. "It is still giving wasteful advice," said director Dr Paul Beckett, who questioned advice on gigantic excavations and dumping soil into landfill sites.

"Digging a 3m-deep pit with a 7m radius is a massive volume, while putting it in landfill is not sustainable and expensive."

Early detection and careful use of herbicides could kill the weed "cheaper and quicker in a few growing seasons," said Dr Beckett.

"I'm not blaming the agency; it has to give advice with wide margins to cover most eventualities," he added.
