

Read on if you dare!

IN THE SPRING OF 2011 3 local primary schools (P3 to P7) courageously set out on an expedition to find out about an alien invading our towns—the invasive species, Japanese Knotweed (JKW).

They did not have far to go!

One eco-minded group from Denny PS had just begun their adventurous walk when they found a patch of knotweed growing just a few metres from their school door! Not only that, but this threat to local species is growing near their newly planted wee school orchard!

Then some pupils from Dunipace PS took a brave walk, only to find that the Avon (aka Anchor) Burn, near their school grounds, has become over run with JKW, which then spreads downstream into the River Carron!

The St Patrick's PS eco pupils were dismayed to find that the whole river bank near their playground is filled with JKW, and that, indeed, the knotweed is holding up the river bank downstream!

The pupils learned that a recent CGI mapping project revealed that the largest colonies of JKW in the Falkirk area are along the River Carron in Denny and Dunipace. They agreed to help spread the word to families in our community about this invasion, by putting together this brochure for you.



Community Green Initiative

This project is part of CGI's 2010-2011 Information Sharing Initiative funded by CVS Growing Communities Fund

SPOT AN ALIEN? DO'S AND DON'Ts!

Please don't walk through a colony—you may help spread it!

Do not cut or break off pieces, strim nor move soil which has or has had knotweed present. This is contaminated and polluted soil!

To deal with knotweed on your own property, see the Invasive Species link on line at Falkirk Council's website, the Ranger Services page. Another good source of information on proper treatment and removal of JKW:

http://www.solriche.co.uk/files/garden/j_knotweed.html#dodont

The Falkirk Invasive Species Forum was recently set up to help progress action to control invasive non-native species across the Falkirk Council area. Its members include interested community groups, landowners, businesses, statutory bodies and Falkirk Council. To report an invasive non-native species in your area, contact the Biodiversity Officer or use the electronic reporting form on the Ranger Service page of www.falkirk.gov.uk.

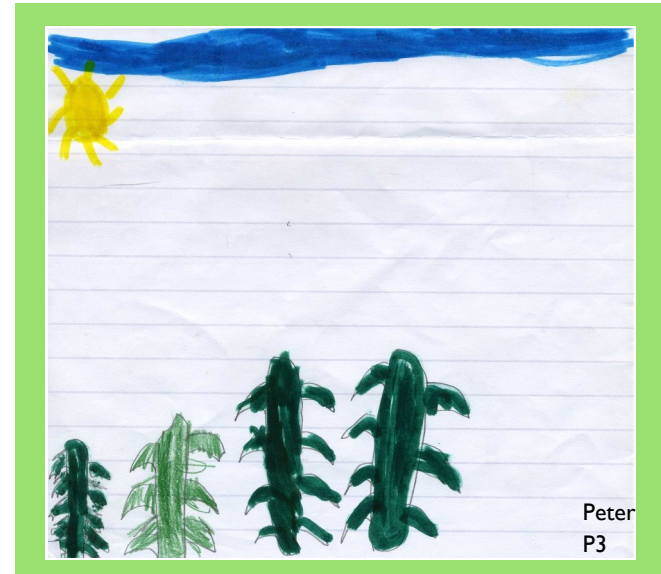
Special thanks to Audrey Morrison of Clackmannanshire & Stirling Environment Trust for the "alien" concept; the teachers at Denny PS, St Patrick's RC PS and Dunipace PS; Fiona Wishart of FC Outdoor Access Rangers; JKW Project Coordinators Jean Weir & Michelle McCallum; Editorial Assistant Christine Bell; CGI JKW River Tour guides Andrew McLagan, Donna Heaney and Tracy McNeil; and the Falkirk Invasive Species Forum.



For more information on this and other CGI initiatives, or to become involved as a volunteer, contact us at communitygreeninitiative@yahoo.co.uk.

ALIENS

AMONG US!



A cautionary tale...

Community Green Initiative
in partnership with
Denny & Dunipace Primary Schools
Invasive Species Project 2011

www.cgiscotland.org



Dunipace PS Pupils discover aliens along the Avon Burn in Dunipace...



Local children from Dunipace Primary School have discovered that indeed there are 'aliens' taking over in Dunipace. Those aliens are of the PLANT variety though.

As part of their science project, the children of P4 and P6 took part in a local CGI project to learn more about Japanese Knotweed. It started with a walk along the River Carron with some CGI volunteers.

Molly said, "We were surprised that this plant grew so tall!"

Jack said, "It's amazing that it grows so deep underground too!" "We were told never to play with it as it can quickly take root and spread." said Rebecca. "Andy showed us a piece of root he had in a bag that survived without water or light." said Garry.

Back in class the children learned about 'alien' and 'native' species and how important it is to monitor alien species of plants as they can have a detrimental effect on our own native plants.

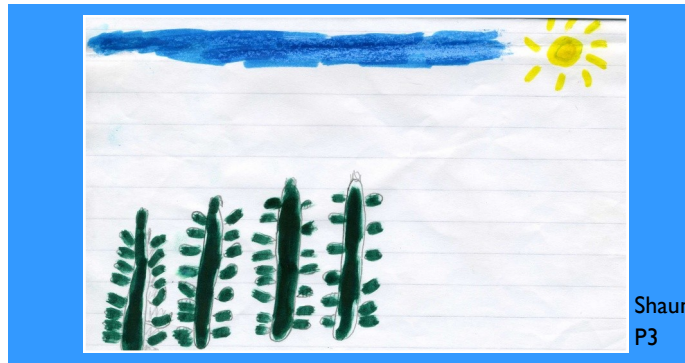
The walk allowed the children to look at native species like the oak trees that have been planted near the school, a local Blackthorn tree and others nearby that make up the Woodland Walk.



"Blackthorn has really big thorns!" remarked Ross. "That could really hurt if you fell in it." said Michael. "I love walking up here." Amy told us.

...whilst St Patrick's PS pupils find more aliens growing along our River Carron

"We have been learning about the infamous Japanese Knotweed project, which is very local, especially around the River Carron. It is 7 metres wide and 3 metres long, when the wind blows, it blows the Knotweed seeds, they scatter all around the Carron and kill other plants." - James and Ciarin, P7



Shaun P3

"Japanese knotweed is growing in Denny and Dunipace. There is lots, millions, near the River Carron. It spreads easily because the wind blows the seeds and it makes more. The roots can grow 3m underground and 7m across the way. It is killing other native plants that cannot grow underneath it because the JKW can get tangled up." — Peter and Shaun, P3

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The St Pat's Eco group makes the following suggestions:

People should go on line to find out more about JKW.

Ensure it does not grow in your garden.

Contact Falkirk Council on proper procedures to treat and dispose.

Please alert your neighbours about JAPANESE KNOTWEED!

...and Denny PS pupils find them right outside their door!



WHAT DOES JKW LOOK LIKE?

Japanese Knotweed has hollow stems. Its distinctly raised nodes give it the appearance of bamboo, although it is not closely related to the bamboo family. Its

stems can reach a height of 3-4 metres each growing season. Oddly you will see smaller plants growing through cracks in pavements and roads, or if it is repeatedly cut down. The leaves are a broad oval shape that grow 7-14 cm long and 5-12 cm broad. The flowers are a cream or white colour, 6-15cm long and grow erect. The growing seasons are summer and early autumn.

Why is it a problem?

- * In Europe, Japanese Knotweed is widely considered an invasive species or weed.
- * It is listed by the world conservation union as one of the world's 100 worst invasive species.
- * The invasive root system and strong growth can damage foundations, buildings, flood defences, roads, paving, retaining walls and architectural sites.
- * In the UK there are no natural enemies for Japanese Knotweed; it out competes all other native species for light, water and nutrients.
- * Stops indigenous plants growing.

(from Denny PS JKW Research Report 2011)

