



## **Frequently Asked Questions for weed control**

### **What is a weed?**

A weed is a plant growing in a location where it's not wanted. On our highways, any plants growing in pavements and kerbs or around drains and street furniture are weeds.

### **Why control weeds?**

Weeds are controlled for the following reasons:

- Appearance - weeds detract from the overall appearance of an area and trap litter
- Safety - weed growth can interfere with visibility for road users and obscure traffic signs. Weeds in kerbs or around drains can prevent or slow down drainage. Their growth on pavements may damage their surface causing broken and uneven slabs.
- Structure - weed growth can destroy paving surfaces, force kerbs apart and crack walls, greatly increasing our maintenance costs.

### **How are weeds controlled?**

Weeds are controlled using environmentally friendly and effective herbicides. When the herbicide is applied to a weed, usually by spraying, it works its way through the plant killing it completely. On contact with soil the herbicide breaks down into harmless substances.

The herbicides used in Warrington have a very low toxicity to humans, animals and insects and can be used in areas open to the public and their pets. In areas close to water courses and reservoirs, herbicides are not used and this can sometimes restrict the effectiveness of the weed spraying.

We regularly consult with independent experts for advice on weed control and related issues to ensure that we're fully up-to-date with changes in legislation, herbicide recommendations and commercial practice.

### **Where are weeds treated?**

All weeds on pavements, kerbs, and paths adjacent to walls or buildings on adopted highways are treated.

## **Weeds and legislation**

There are five weeds listed in the [Weeds Act 1959](#);

- Spear Thistle,
- Creeping or Field Thistle,
- Curled Dock,
- Broad Leaved Dock and
- Common [ragwort](#).

We'll remove [ragwort](#) on highway verges where there is a high risk of ragwort spreading to land used for the grazing of horses and other grazing animals, or for the production of animal feed.

Under section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it can be an offence to plant or grow certain specified plants in the wild, including Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed.

There's no statutory requirement for landowners to remove these plants from their property but it's an offence to allow them to spread to adjacent land.

### **How to report weed problems on the highway**

Any reports regarding nonhazardous weeds will be logged and used to target them during the final weed spray of the year.

If you'd like to report overgrown weeds on our highways, please use our [online form](#).