Buddleia, *Buddleja davidii*

**Overview**

**Short description of *Buddleja davidii*, Buddleia**

A medium to large perennial shrub with long arching branches. The lilac/purple (sometimes white) flowers occur in dense pyramidal shaped panicles, which produce large quantities of nectar. The opposite leaves are lance shaped, deep green above and white-tomentose below.

**Description of *Buddleja davidii*, Buddleia status in GB**

An increasing, naturalised garden escape, that is especially prevalent on urban and disturbed sites.

**Impacts summary: *Buddleja davidii*, Buddleia**

Rapidly forms large dense thickets becoming the dominant vegetation on sites. These out-compete native vegetation reducing the biodiversity of sites.

**Habitat summary: *Buddleja davidii*, Buddleia**

In its native distribution a species of riverside thickets. Across both its native and non-native distribution it rapidly colonises natural and disturbed habitats. It can tolerate a wide range of soil types and conditions, but prefers dry open sites and is frost tolerant.

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**Invasion history: *Buddleja davidii*, Buddleia**

**Origin**

Native to temperate central and south-western China.

**First Record**

Introduced in to cultivation in 1896 and first recorded wild in 1922 in Merioneth.

**Pathway and Method**

Introduced as an ornamental plant. This very popular garden plant has since escaped cultivation on multiple occasions as a consequence of its highly dispersable seed.

**Species Status**

Over the past few decades it has rapidly spread throughout lowland Britain and is still increasing its range and frequency. It is a naturalised invasive alien species in Europe, Australasia and North America. Although naturalised in many US states it is not considered invasive in all of these states.

**Ecology & Habitat: *Buddleja davidii*, Buddleia**

**Dispersal Mechanisms**
Seed is adapted for wind dispersal and to a lesser extent dispersal by water. Seed can be distributed over long distances using wind currents. Additional dispersal can be facilitated by the air currents generated by cars and trains. Stem cuttings can also regenerate new plants and these can be dispersed via waterways.

Reproduction

Flowers are insect pollinated by butterflies, bees and other insects. A standard plant can produce up to 3 million seeds per year. Has the ability to reproduce asexually via stem and root cuttings.

Known Predators/Herbivores

Has few pests but certain caterpillars, weevils, moths, spider mites, fungal leaf spot and die back will attack it. Goats will also eat the vegetation but not sufficiently to control the plant.

Resistant Stages

Seeds show lengthy dormancy, remaining in the seed bank for several years.

Habitat Occupied in GB

Often associated with habitation, this species can be found on waste ground, walls, railway banks, quarries and areas of scrub.

Distribution: *Buddleja davidii*, Buddleia

Common throughout southern England decreasing northwards to northern Scotland, especially associated with towns and cities.

Impacts: *Buddleja davidii*, Buddleia

Environmental Impact

Out-competes native floras producing dense monotypic thickets. Provides a valuable source of food to a variety of insects which in turn attract birds and bats. The dense thickets also provide cover for mammals such as foxes and badgers.

Health and Social Impact

A popular garden plant that is commonly planted for its decorative flowers and as a nectar source for butterflies.

Economic Impact

Can cause structural damage when plants get a foothold in walls, pavements, chimneys etc. Listed and historic buildings are particularly under threat. Estimates to the cost of damage to properties, both historical and private, currently in the UK is £960,000. Also causes significant problems to the management of the rail network.

References & Links: *Buddleja davidii*, Buddleia

Identification


Biology, ecology, spread, vectors


Management and impact


ISSG database


General

