

# Early Detection, Rapid Response Invasive Plant Fact Sheet: Japanese Knotweed



Figure 1:

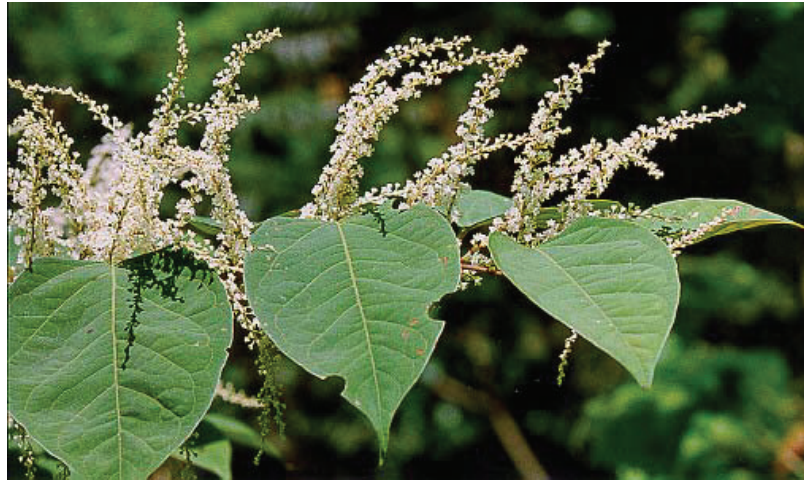


Figure 2:



Figure 3:

**Common name:** Japanese knotweed

**Scientific name:** *Polygonum cuspidatum*, *Reynoutria japonica*

**Duration:** Perennial

**Characteristics:** Knotweed grows in dense stands up to 12 feet tall. Stems are green to purple and may resemble bamboo or appear zig-zagged. The leaves are simple, branch alternately and are cordate (heart) to spade-shaped. Knotweed emerges from the ground in April and white to light green flowers appear in late summer. It spreads within the landscape by root or stem pieces moved by waterways and through other soil disturbance. Knotweed plants spread horizontally beneath the surface via rhizomes. These rhizomes may spread up to 20 feet from the source plant before sprouting new shoots.

Knotweed is particularly troublesome due to the damage it can cause to stream banks and structures. It forms a dense monoculture that crowds out native vegetation. It can create bank erosion concerns, and reduce recreational access to waterways.

## Treatment options

Due to how this plant spreads through propagules or rhizomes, manual control can be challenging, particularly in large areas with well-established populations. Manual control may be used for smaller patches of knotweed, however effective control can take three to five years of regular persistent treatment. For larger established patches of knotweed, an integrated vegetation management approach may be required. Often this can include the use of herbicides, and only licensed applicators should perform this management option.

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Figure 4:



Figure 5:

## Treatment options: (cont.)

**Manual control:** Cut back plants twice a month from April until winter dieback occurs. Cutting knotweed may stimulate growth, so repeat treatment is required. This work should be paired with the removal and proper disposal of all stem fragments. Do not compost, or allow any stem fragments to enter waterways. Do not spread soil that is potentially contaminated by knotweed roots or rhizomes. Any soil that is obtained within 20 feet of a knotweed patch could contain fragments of rhizomes, which can grow into new plants.

**Chemical control:** Chemical control is the recommended prescription for eradication of large stands of Japanese knotweed. Only licensed applicators, using aquatic-safe herbicides should perform this management option. Either a foliar or stem-injection application may be used. Herbicide treatment should occur only in the fall once flowers have finished blooming, but prior to the plant dying back. This time is critical to effective control and protection of pollinators.

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