

CONTROL

When managing knotweed and any other invasive species, it is critical to follow best practices for two important reasons: these practices use the most effective way(s) for control and avoid causing any unintentional harm to the environment.

To address knotweed, the root system known as rhizomes, must be controlled. Cutting alone is not effective. A combination of cutting, proper disposal, and herbicide is the most effective management strategy. When using herbicide, always follow label instructions, use the minimum effective concentration, and avoid spraying on windy days or during flowering periods.

For detailed management strategies and treatment timing for invasive knotweed, please consult these experts:

- Penn State Extension
www.extension.psu.edu / (877) 345-0691
- PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
www.dcnr.pa.gov / (717) 787-2703



Invasive knotweeds evolved to quickly establish in harsh conditions following volcanic eruptions. It can survive long periods of dormancy and is able to grow through very strong materials. As such, it can burrow into foundations and break up roadways, sidewalks, catch basins, and other concrete structures. In the U.K., where knotweed has been a problem for longer, nearby knotweed has prevented some people from getting a mortgage.

Knotweed is very hardy and even small pieces can take root and start a new patch. It is often unintentionally established when road work or construction involves relocating soils. Care must be taken by municipalities to not allow knotweed to spread to other areas of the community. By following management best practices, it is possible to control knotweed populations and avoid further spread.



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INVASIVE KNOTWEEDS

Identification and Management



Japanese Knotweed, a highly invasive plant in our region, was actually introduced in the 1800s as an ornamental plant.



WHAT IS INVASIVE KNOTWEED?

Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Giant Knotweed (*Fallopia sachalinensis*) are native to eastern Asia, where natural competition keep the species in check. It was introduced to North America as an ornamental garden plant and erosion control option in the late 1800s.

In North America, it has no natural competition and has become an invasive species. In Pennsylvania and much of the United States, it can be found in wetlands, forests, streambanks, vacant lots, ditches, roadsides, and backyards.

They degrade natural areas through rapid colonization, displacing native species and reducing biodiversity. Japanese and Giant Knotweed readily hybridize in the wild making identification between the three species difficult. The same management techniques may be used for all species.



IDENTIFICATION



Can grow up to 16 feet tall. Spreads vertically through its root system, from which many shoots will sprout.



Stems are hollow and jointed. It can be confused with bamboo, which is another invasive species.



Leaves can grow up to 16 inches long and are heart or spade-shaped.



Small, cream-colored clusters of flowers present from summer to fall. Before the flowers open, they are a pale green color.



New growth resembles asparagus and can be red or purple in color. In Pennsylvania, it sprouts in very early spring.

PREVENTING ITS SPREAD

Knotweed spreads through its extensive horizontal root system, called rhizomes. Rhizomes can easily split when disturbed. Each fragment is capable of re-sprouting!

TIPS FOR STOPPING THE SPREAD:

- Manage populations as soon as you notice them. Smaller populations of knotweed are much easier to control than larger ones, and you'll also prevent it from spreading to neighboring areas.
- Follow best practices. Check with Penn State or DCNR for the latest information on effective management techniques that won't cause unintentional environmental harm.
- Avoid re-sprouting with proper disposal. Cut knotweed should be thrown in the trash or dried out in the sun on a surface, such as a tarp or asphalt, that won't allow it to re-sprout.
- Clean your equipment. Machinery used to cut knotweed should be cleaned prior to being used at another site.

