



REPORT THIS SPECIES! Oregon: 1-866-INVADER or OregonInvasivesHotline.org; Washington: 1-877-9-INFEST or www.invasivespecies.wa.gov/report.shtml; California: 1-866-440-9530 or www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Invasives/report

Knotweeds are a group of closely related invasive plants from Asia that includes Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), giant knotweed (*Polygonum sachalinense*), Bohemian knotweed (*Fallopia x bohemicum*), and Himalayan knotweed (*Polygonum polystachyum*). Knotweeds are very tall plants that can grow to over three meters with bamboo-like hollow stems and heart-shaped or lance-shaped leaves. All knotweeds are highly invasive. They spread quickly and form tall, dense thickets. They dominate stream banks, sides of roads, gardens, and other sunny, moist, and disturbed sites. They shade out native and desirable plants, reduce access to streams, and their strong roots can destroy buildings. In the UK, archaeological sites are threatened by the spread of knotweed!

Species in the news

"Invasion of Japanese knotweed putting house at risk—family fears" by Daniel Mansfield, *Ely Standard*. November 20, 2014. http://www.elystandard.co.uk/news/invasion_of_japanese_knotweed_putting_house_at_risk_family_fears_1_3855220

Learning extensions

"Polygonum Positions," a critical thinking writing activity about the cost and benefit of knotweed control. Available in the Teacher Guide to Knotweed Activities.

Resources

Comprehensive information and photos about knotweed from King County in Washington State. Available at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/animalsAndPlants/noxious-weeds/weed-identification/invasive-knotweeds.aspx>

Why you should care

Knotweed forms a tall, dense canopy that shades out native plants and alters wildlife habitat. These attractive perennials have been introduced as ornamental plants to many new regions, where they often become invasive. Along streams, knotweed can prevent establishment of trees that are critical to riparian health. Trees are important along streams and rivers because they stabilize the bank, provide nutrient rich plant litter to the river, and are habitat for birds, insects, and salmon (by providing shade and large woody debris). Knotweed also increases erosion along streams and its strong roots can reduce the value of property by damaging buildings, roads, and levees.

How it got here and spread

Knotweeds were first introduced as a popular ornamental plant and escaped into wild lands. It primarily spreads vegetatively and is transported to new sites through soil movement, flooding, or discarded garden clippings. New populations can be established from root or stem fragments as small as 1 cm.

What you can do

Help stop the spread of knotweed by using native or noninvasive alternatives in your garden. Help spread the word by making others aware of this noxious invader. Use proper control techniques, which must be thorough, to prevent further spread. Controlling knotweed is a long-term, multiyear project.

COOL FACT

In Japan, knotweed is known by the name "Itadori," meaning "heals the sick."

