

Knotweed Alert!

Knotweeds are aggressive noxious weeds that invade and degrade streams and riverbanks causing erosion, bank collapse and disruption of local ecosystems.



There are four species of knotweed on the noxious weed list in Washington State: Japanese (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), giant (*P. sachalinense*), Bohemian (*P. x bohemicum*) a hybrid of Japanese and giant, and Himalayan (*P. polystachyum*).

Typically found growing along waterways, these perennial plants negatively impact native plants, salmon spawning habitat, birds and other wildlife. Knotweeds are also found in disturbed areas and home landscapes where they can damage foundations, driveways and roads.

How can I recognize it?

Growth:

Knotweed is fast-growing, reaching 6-12+ feet tall. It dies back to the ground in winter, leaving reddish-brown dead stems. Thick, aggressive rhizomes spread extensively, allowing plants to form large stands.

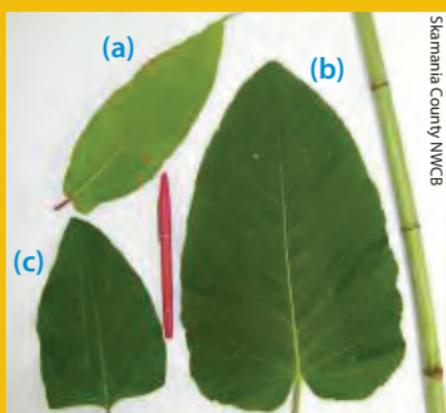
Stems and leaves:

Stems are bamboo-like, hollow and reddish or green.

Leaves are alternate, heart-shaped with a rounded or squared base, or lance-shaped. Leaves have smooth edges.

Flowers:

Small, white flowers in clusters, present in late summer.



Knotweed leaves: Himalayan (a), giant (b) and Japanese (c), with stem on right. Bohemian knotweed (not shown) is a hybrid of giant and Japanese knotweed and the leaves are intermediate between parents.

Turn Over for Control and Contact Information

How can I control it?

Knotweed spreads by roots, stem and root fragments and seeds, making control a multiple year project that must include the proper disposal of plant parts. Herbicide use is typically the most effective option.

Herbicide Application:

Both spray and non-spray methods can be used and are typically best applied in later summer to early fall. Stems of tall plants can be cut or bent in early summer and sprayed when plants regrow to waist height. For non-spray methods, herbicides can be injected into the stem or wiped directly onto stem. Some limitations apply and are indicated on the herbicide label.

Multiple year treatments will likely be required.

Read and follow all label directions when using herbicides. A permit and license is required for use near water. Contact your local county noxious weed board for possible assistance treating knotweed near water and for herbicide recommendations and information about their proper, safe and legal use.

Manual:

Pulling or digging plants can be used if infestations are small and isolated. All new growth must be frequently controlled. Cutting plants back to the base once every two weeks is also an option. Properly remove and dispose of all roots and stems in a landfill to avoid spreading plants. Cut plants can be covered with landscape fabric or heavy tarps and weighed down. Flatten any new growth that shifts the material.

Follow Up:

Frequently check the site for regrowth and repeat treatments when necessary. Revegetate bare ground with appropriate plants.

To learn more:

Contact your local county noxious weed control board, WSU Extension office, Conservation District or the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Visit: www.nwcb.wa.gov



Tim Miller, WSU

Knotweed can resprout from even the smallest plant fragment. Never put knotweed in yard waste or compost bins.