



FACT SHEET

KNOTWEEDS

Japanese knotweed(*Polygonum cuspidatum*); **Giant knotweed** (*P. sachalinense*); **Bohemian knotweed**, (*P. bohemicum*) and **Himalayan knotweed** (*P. polystachyum*)

- Thick green to reddish stems that look similar to bamboo
- Large bright green leaves ranging from egg to heart-shaped with a pointed tip
- Sprouts in April, grows to 15 feet tall or more by July
- Spikes of white flowers appear from July to September
- Giant and Japanese knotweed are distinguished from each other primarily by the size of the leaf and height of the plant—giant being much larger with leaves up to 18 inches long. Bohemian is intermediate between the two and Himalayan knotweed (which has not been seen in Jefferson County) has a much narrower leaf
- Buckwheat family



ECOLOGY:

- Knotweeds generally spread by rhizomes (underground stems which can sprout), but sometimes by seed.
- Japanese and giant knotweeds frequently hybridize, producing Bohemian knotweed. Most of the knotweed in Jefferson County is currently believed to be Bohemian.

DISTRIBUTION:

- Knotweed is frequently seen in ornamental plantings and on waterways.
- The most affected waterways are the Big Quilcene and Dosewallips Rivers

WHY BE CONCERNED?

- Knotweed is extremely invasive and develops a deep, matted root system, with rhizomes that can grow to 30 feet or more in length.
- Originally introduced as an ornamental, plants frequently spread accidentally when roots or stem pieces are moved by people, machinery or water. Tiny root fragments as small as 1 inch can produce new plants.
- Knotweeds form dense thickets that exclude native species and are of little value to wildlife.
- At the end of the growing season, a mass of dead stems remains that crowds out native plant seedlings and leaves river banks vulnerable to erosion as well as to flooding.
- Once established these plants are very difficult to eradicate.

Knotweed is Class B Noxious Weed Control is required in and within 50 feet of gravel pits in Jefferson County.

CONTROL

Prevention and early detection are the best means of control!

- **Do not buy** or plant invasive knotweeds
- **Avoid** introducing soil or gravel from areas known to have knotweeds
- **Clean** equipment that has been used in infested areas.
- **Manually pull or dig** small, poorly established infestations, removing ALL the roots.
- **Dispose** of weeds properly; do NOT leave stems or root fragments on moist ground or in compost, because they will regrow. Also, never throw any part of knotweed plants into a waterway, because they will be carried downstream and probably start a new infestation.
- **Monitor** the site for several years; promptly remove new plants, being sure to dig out all the roots.

Because of knotweed's tremendous ability to resprout following cutting, successful control usually requires herbicides.

SPRAY HERBICIDE on the leaves and stems in summer or early fall. To avoid spraying very tall plants, it is possible to cut the stems once in May or June and allow the plant to regrow to at least waist height. Most patches require more than one year of treatment.

NON-SPRAY HERBICIDE METHODS include injecting undiluted herbicide directly into the lower sections of every stem or applying slightly diluted herbicide directly onto stems. Some limitations, as indicated on the label, apply.

Always read and follow directions on the product label! Call the Weed Board for specific herbicide advice.

Warning: Knotweed usually grows close to water and any herbicide application near or over water requires a permit from the Department of Ecology and a specially licensed applicator.

MANUALLY PULL or DIG very small, poorly established infestations, removing all the roots. Check often for new sprouts and repeat. Or, **CUT** the stems close to the ground every two weeks throughout the growing season. Both methods will require several years of persistent treatment for successful control. Manual methods should be used cautiously—pulling or digging often leave root fragments in the ground--cutting or mowing do not remove roots, and all methods can cause roots to resprout, often at some distance away. Be sure to monitor up to 30 feet from the original plant, because shoots can arise that far away. Plant parts should be disposed of carefully—see box above.

Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board has been successfully treating knotweed infestations for several years, through the OLYMPIC KNOTWEED WORKING GROUP, and will continue doing so. If you have knotweed on your property and it is near water, please contact us.



Young knotweed sprouts can easily grow through asphalt!