

What is knotweed?

Japanese, giant and Himalayan knotweed are perennial plants native to Asia, but planted in gardens here. Common names include Mexican or Japanese bamboo, elephant ear and fleecflower. By any name, they are noxious weeds and a critical threat to our rivers' health.

Scientific names include:

Polygonum cuspidatum, *Fallopia* or *Reynoutria japonica*, *P. sachalinense*, and *P. polystachyum*.



Why is knotweed a problem?

Knotweed is fast growing and extremely aggressive. It invades river and creek banks, permanently displaces native vegetation, destroys critical fish and wildlife habitat and reduces recreational opportunities. Due to a huge and vigorous root system, large patches are very difficult to eradicate. Seasonal flooding continues to spread knotweed throughout many Northwest watersheds. Thousands of patches are known from the Clackamas, Sandy and Washougal Rivers alone.

Knotweed is an aggressive and destructive weed that spreads quickly, shades out native plants and destroys habitat. We need to act now! Within a few years it will be virtually impossible to control knotweed.

What does it look like?

- Dense stands up to 12 feet tall.
- Bamboo-like, green or reddish stems.
- Bright green leaves 1 to 8 inches wide with smooth (not saw-toothed) edges.
- Starts growth in April; full size by July.
- Spikes of small, white flowers in late summer.
- Dormant in winter, the dead, brown stems may remain standing.

Where does it grow?

Knotweed thrives in any moist soil or river cobble, in full or partial sunlight. Most common in the flood plains along rivers and creeks, it also grows in road-side ditches, waste areas and beaches.

How does it spread?

In the Pacific Northwest, knotweed usually spreads when roots are moved by floods or in contaminated soil. Because root fragments as small as 1/2 inch can start new plants, even one patch can produce hundreds of new plants.

What is being done?

Concerned citizens, watershed councils, conservation organizations and public agencies are teaming up to control knotweed in many watersheds.



Bamboo-like stems and smooth-edged, heart shaped leaves of a Japanese knotweed plant.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- **Check Your Property.** If you have knotweed, control it using the methods described here.
- **Call Us!** Many watershed groups offer **free knotweed control.*** For help or detailed control information, contact one of the groups listed on the back of this brochure.
- **Avoid Spreading Knotweed.** Be careful working around it as small fragments can get into machinery, dirt piles or the river and be moved to other areas.
- **Volunteer** with your local control program.

* Free knotweed control is currently available in the Sandy and Clackamas Watersheds, and Lincoln and Grant counties.

HOW CAN IT BE CONTROLLED?

Several treatment options are described here. Because of knotweed's tremendous ability to resprout following cutting, successful control usually requires herbicides. Please check with your local extension agent, weed board or the Department of Agriculture for information about the proper, safe and legal use of herbicides.

- **SPRAY HERBICIDE** containing glyphosate (e.g. Rodeo, Aquamaster, Roundup, Gly Star) on the leaves and stems in summer or early fall. To avoid spraying very tall plants, cut the stems once in May or June and allow the plant to regrow to about waist height. Most patches require more than one year of treatment.

Always read and follow directions on the product label and keep herbicides out of waterways. Desirable plants hit with spray will be injured or killed.

- **NON-SPRAY HERBICIDE METHODS** include injecting undiluted herbicide directly into the lower sections of every stem* or applying slightly diluted herbicide directly onto freshly cut stems.

*Please note: This promising new treatment is not yet legal in Oregon without special permit.

- **MANUALLY PULL or DIG** surface roots of plants in loose soil. 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.

Cut stems or root fragments left on moist soil, in the river or in compost will regrow. Please dry or carefully dispose of all knotweed material.