Japanese Knotweed- *Fallopia japonica*

Commonly Asked Questions:

Northern Ireland Environment Agency







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1. Where can I get additional information?

- http://invasivespeciesireland.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Japanese-
- knotweed-BPM_-_Invasive_Species_Ireland-_updated-_-R_Muir_March_2016-6.pdf
- (JK Best Practice Management Guidelines)
  http://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI (invasive section)
- http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/conservation/8408 70/840941/?
  version=1&lang=_e (EA Knotweed code of Practice) www.netregs.gov.uk

2. What does it look like?

Spring / summer

- Grows up to 3 metres in height forming very dense stands.
- Small red shoots in April as the knotweed emerges.
- Red / purple coloured stems.
- Leaves arranged in a zigzag pattern along the stem.
- Creamy white flowers in clusters in late summer.
- Hollow stems.
- Distinctive orange centred rhizome (root).

Autumn / winter

- Brown stems lying or standing.
- Evidence of flowers still on stems (brown coloured).
- Distinctive orange centred rhizome (root).

- The distinctive rhizome (root) system often extents to approximately 7 metres horizontally from the parent plant and approximately 3 metres vertically in depth below the parent plant.



Late summer flowering (*image by John Early*) – **note red stems**



New growth from existing stand in Spring (*image by John Early*)



Brown winter canes (*image by John Early*)



Distinctive orange rhizome centre (*image by John Early*)

3. What is Japanese Knotweed?

Japanese knotweed is a non-native invasive species (Alien / exotic). It is a perennial plant that was introduced into the UK as an ornamental plant from Eastern Asia in the 19th century.

4. How does it spread?

It is spread entirely via the movement of soil material that is infected with fragments of rhizome (root) or vegetatively by plant material. Though Japanese knotweed flowers only female plants are known to occur in Northern Ireland. Occasionally hybrids do occur but these usually do not survive.

5. Where should I report it?

There are two ways that an invasive species can be recorded:

- Through the 'Alien watch' facility of www.invasivespeciesireland.com.

Or

- Through CEDAR at the Ulster Museum through their website http://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI

6. What can I do about it?

There are several ways of dealing with Japanese knotweed:

Deep excavation with deep burial

- If the site has to be used urgently then the Japanese knotweed will have to be excavated for deep burial due to the extensive rhizome system and the potential for it to spread during the activity e.g. development. Guidance on this method is available from the GB Environment Agency 'Knotweed Code of Practice'. Carrying out an activity such as development before the knotweed has been controlled will potentially only lead to its further spread. Reports suggest a fragment of Rhizome as little as 1g can result in new growth. This method works on the principle of excavating the rhizome system at a depth of approximately 3 metres and a distance horizontally of approximately 7 metres from the parent plant (care should be taken to observe the rhizome does not extend further during excavation). The excavated material can either be deep buried on site following the GB Knotweed code of practice guidelines (allowing it should not interfere with ground water) or arrangements should be made to dispose of it at a licensed landfill site that will accept it for deep burial (see question 8).

Herbicide Application

- Japanese knotweed can also be controlled by using an approved systemic herbicide over several years; most available are glyphosate based. The herbicide should be applied to the Japanese knotweed leaves ensuring the maximum surface area is covered. It is recommended to apply the herbicide during the early stages of the growing season to knock back the forthcoming seasons growth. This should be followed up with another herbicide application in September – October time before the Japanese knotweed starts to die back for the winter. This will maximise herbicide uptake into the rhizome system. This process should be repeated in subsequent years until no regrowth is observed. Timescale of eradication is dependant on how well the plant is established when treatment commences. Care should be taken to minimise herbicide spray onto non-target species. The herbicide selected for control is the decision of the landowner. They must be sure not to breach the herbicide label conditions and health and safety recommendations. Extra care should be taken when selecting a herbicide for treating Japanese knotweed near water as not all glyphosate based herbicides are approved for this use. Consideration should also be taken for stopping public access during treatment.

Cut and Inject technique

Details of this can method can be found at:
http://www.conservationevidence.com/reference/download/2124

Note :

- Care should be taken to ensure cut canes are not left lying on the ground.
- To burn the Japanese knotweed canes which have been cut, an exemption from NIEA Waste Management licensing within Schedule 2 Part 1 under paragraph 30, would be required for each site where the canes are produced.

7. Who has responsibility for dealing with it?

If Japanese knotweed is on a Northern Ireland Environment Agency owned property then it is the responsibility of the NIEA to deal with the Japanese knotweed.

If the stand is on a private site then any decision to control the Japanese knotweed lies with the landowner. While it is not an offence to have an established Japanese knotweed stand growing on their property at present an offence would be committed if it was knowingly removed from the site leading to its further spread e.g. if the canes or rhizomes where cut / excavated and removed from the site resulting in its further spread.

8. Relevant legislation?

- The Wildlife Order (NI) 1985, Article 15, Schedule 9, Part II.

"Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person plants or otherwise causes to grow in the wild any plant which is included in Part II of schedule 9. He shall be guilty of an offence."

- The Waste Management Regulations (NI) 2006.

"It shall be the duty of the occupier of any domestic property to take all such measures available to him as are reasonable in the circumstances to secure that any transfer by him of household waste produced on the property is only to an authorised person or to a person for authorised transport purposes".

- The Controlled Waste (Duty of Care) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002.

The Duty of Care places a legal responsibility on anyone who produces, imports, stores, transports, treats, recycles or disposes of waste to take the necessary steps to keep it safe and to prevent it from causing harm, especially to the environment or to human health.

9. Where can I dispose of it?

Japanese Knotweed can be disposed of at any non-hazardous deep-fill landfill site. It is advised to contact your local licensed landfill site to check that they will accept the Japanese knotweed waste material as not all landfill sites will accept it. They may also require notice to arrange its disposal.

10. What not to do?

- Do NOT cut it down and leave the stems lying on the ground.
- Do NOT remove from the site unless taking it to an approved land fill site that will accept it.
- Do NOT dig it out of the ground and break up the rhizome (root) system unless deep excavation of the stand is taking place.

www.ni-environment.gov.uk

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