

Why should I control knotweed?

Several government agencies, tribes, non-profit organizations, and private landowners are working hard to rid Washington streams, rivers and beaches of damaging and persistent knotweed infestations. This is a difficult but necessary effort.

When all citizens help by controlling knotweed on their property, government agencies and volunteers have a better chance of success. And the more citizens do, the less government must spend, which saves tax dollars.



Restored site along the Dickey River in Clallam County. Top left picture shows the knotweed infested site. The bottom right picture shows the native grasses emerging after knotweed control.

(Images by Frank Geyer, Quileute Tribe)

Why is knotweed a problem?

Knotweed is a destructive plant that is invading and degrading Washington streams and river banks. It causes erosion, bank collapses, and the disruption of local ecosystems.

This aggressive and fast-growing noxious weed crowds out native plants that wildlife need to survive. It can clog stream beds and degrade spawning habitat for salmon.

Knotweeds' massive root systems can also damage building foundations, sidewalks, driveways and roads. It can also overwhelm yards and cause expensive damage to septic systems.

Knotweed can easily spread from site to site during flooding events or even through beaver dam construction. Knotweed is also spread by mowing machinery and improper disposal of stems and roots.



This river may look pretty, but it's actually a disaster area — native willows, grasses, and other plants have been overwhelmed by knotweed. Salmon and other fish, birds, insects and many other wild animals lose valuable habitat when knotweed invades.

We're here to help

If you have questions about knotweed control, have knotweed on your property and want assistance, or if you aren't sure if you have knotweed or other noxious weeds, we can help. Please contact us at:

WA State Noxious Weed Control Board
(360) 725-5764

noxiousweeds@agr.wa.gov

www.nwcb.wa.gov

Or

WA Department of Agriculture
PestProgram@agr.wa.gov

Or

Contact your local County
Noxious Weed Control Board:

Do you have knotweed on your property?



Knotweed species destroy native habitat, take over entire riverbanks, and reduce the recreational quality of Pacific Northwest rivers. Please help save our lands and rivers from this destructive noxious weed.

This brochure was adapted with permission from its original version, courtesy of the Clallam County Conservation District.

What is knotweed?

Japanese (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), Giant (*P. sachalinense*), their hybrid Bohemian (*P. bohemicum*), and Himalayan knotweed (*P. polystachyum*) are perennial plants native to Asia. These plants were introduced to the United States in the late 1800's as ornamentals and have since spread to many areas throughout the Pacific Northwest. Common names include Mexican or Japanese bamboo, elephant ear and fleecflower. Knotweed species are also known by the name *Fallopia*, such as *Fallopia japonica*. By any name, they are invasive, noxious weeds and a serious threat to the health of our rivers and ecosystems.



Clockwise from top left: leaf of Himalayan, Giant, and Japanese knotweed, and, at right, typical bamboo-like cane. Bohemian knotweed (not shown) is a hybrid of giant and Japanese knotweed and the leaves are intermediate between parents

(Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Board)

What does it look like?

Your plant may be knotweed if:

- It grows in dense stands, six to twelve feet tall.
- Its leaves are heart shaped, lance-shaped, or triangular and between one to twelve inches wide with smooth (not saw-toothed) edges.
- Its leaves are alternately arranged on the stem, which often has a slight zig-zag appearance (see below, left).
- It has bamboo-like, hollow green or reddish stems (see below, right).
- It is found growing along flood plains along rivers and creeks, and in yards, roadside ditches, waste areas, and beaches.
- It starts growing in April and is full size by July.
- It has spikes of small, white flowers in late summer.
- It goes dormant in winter, although the dead, brown stems may remain standing.



How do I control it?

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 weed board, WSU extension office, conservation district, or the WA Department of Agriculture for information about the proper, safe and legal use of herbicides. A special permit and license is required when using herbicide near waterways.

Spray Herbicide containing glyphosate (e.g. Rodeo, Aquamaster, Roundup, Aquaneat) or in combination with Imazapyr (e.g. PolarisAQ, Habitat) on the leaves and stems in summer or early fall. To more effectively treat very tall plants, cut the stems once in May or June, and then spray the plant when it regrows 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 wiping slightly diluted herbicide

directly onto stems. Some limitations apply and are indicated on the label. Always read and follow directions on the product label and keep herbicides out of waterways.



Manually Pull or Dig individual canes or brand new infestations, removing all the 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, being sure to dispose of the stems properly. Both methods will require several years of persistent treatment for successful control and are best suited for small, isolated patches of knotweed.



Warning: Even the smallest fragment of a knotweed plant will sprout roots and grow. That's why it's important to properly dispose of knotweed. Bag up all plant parts and put them in the trash. Never put knotweed in with yard waste or in compost bins. Do not dump plants in vacant lots or leave cut stems in or along rivers where they could be moved and invade new areas. Be careful working around knotweed, as small fragments can get into machinery, dirt piles, or the river and be moved to other areas. (Image by Dr. Tim Miller, WSU)