

Invasive Plant Species: Knotweed spp.

(*Fallopia* spp. and *Polygonum* sp.)



Originally brought to BC as a garden ornamental, knotweed species have escaped from garden beds and have started taking over roadsides, riverbanks and other disturbed areas. Also known as Japanese Bamboo or Ornamental Bamboo, they are spread primarily through human action and high-water events that distribute pieces of rhizomes and stems throughout waterways.

Identification



There are four invasive knotweed species in BC: Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Giant Knotweed (*F. sachalinensis*), Bohemian knotweed (*F. x bohemica*) and Himalayan Knotweed (*Polygonum polystachyum*). All four species have a very similar appearance and can be identified by their mottled purple-brown, hollow bamboo-like stems that form dense stands 1.5-6 metres tall. Leaves are large and heart shaped with smooth edges. Cream-coloured flowers are produced at the end of stems in late August and continue into early fall. Knotweeds die back in winter and re-sprout in early spring. They can be confused with other bamboo species or native Red Elderberry. Immature plants may be confused with Solomon's seal.

Why is Knotweed a problem?

Knotweed poses threats to local environments and infrastructure. It has been known to grow up to 4 cm in one day and a piece of Knotweed rhizome as small as 0.5 cm can grow an entirely new plant.

Impacts include:

- Threats to fish habitat are caused through erosion and exposure to sunlight when large knotweed stands die back in the winter
- Replacement of plants which provide food sources for wildlife
- Knotweed stands can't be used by nesting birds and do not provide enough year-round cover to support native amphibians and reptiles
- Shoots and roots can grow through concrete and tarmac resulting in damage to roads, foundations, and septic and drainage systems, which can be costly to repair





Controlling Knotweeds on Your Property

Total eradication of a knotweed site can take several years, but it is possible. Treatment methods will depend on the size, number and location of the plants on your property.

DO

- Begin treatment as soon as possible. The larger the infestation, the more damage it can cause and the more difficult it is to eradicate.
- Avoid disturbing soil and wash vehicles/equipment that have been onsite.
- Remove all plant parts, each has the potential to create a new invasion. Handle carefully and **dispose of properly** (see below).
- Continuously check the contaminated areas for up to 20 years after initial treatment and retreat new growth, as needed.
- If using Herbicides to control Knotweed, be sure to follow the directions on the label.

DON'T

- **Do not** weed whack or mow knotweed as it can encourage root growth and can make the infestation worse.
- **Do not** cut the stems without treating the roots. Cutting stems encourages the roots to take on more nutrients, enhancing the growth of the root system considerably.
- **Do not** compost! Some parts of knotweed survive the composting process.
- **Do not** spread any soil that has been contaminated with knotweed (this includes soil within 10 m from the knotweed site).

Proper Disposal

For safe disposal, place plant material in garbage bags labeled "invasive species," tied off using a gooseneck tie and zap strap and take to Bings Creek Solid Waste Management Facility (3900 Drinkwater Road, Duncan) or Peerless Road Drop-off Depot (10830 Peerless Road, Ladysmith).

For more information on invasive plant species visit

www.northcowichan.ca/Plants

Invasive Species Council of BC (ISC)

<https://bcinvasives.ca/>

Reporting Invasive Species

www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species

Need help identifying potential invasive species on your property?
Email us a picture!

Contact us:

E environment@northcowichan.ca

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