

Knotweed



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Invasive Species Alert Sheet

Capital Region Invasive Species Program

The spread of non-native invasive plants has serious ecological, economic and health impacts.

Local governments and partners are asking for help from all residents to address knotweed outbreaks on private property and public lands. Local professionals can assist with the special treatment required for this species.

Native to eastern Asia, a number of knotweed outbreaks have been reported across the province—including in the capital region, where it has been designated a priority species while eradication is still possible.

Knotweed species in the region include: Japanese (*Reynoutria japonica*), Bohemian (*Reynoutria x Bohemica*), Giant (*Reynoutria sachalinensis*) and Himalayan (*Persicaria wallichii*/*Polygonum polystachyum*).

Why is knotweed a problem?

- One of the world's worst invasive species and a top-ten invasive species for eradication in BC that is extremely difficult to control
- Dense stands eliminate all other vegetation and are extremely difficult to eradicate
- Ecological impacts include damage to fish and wildlife habitat, biodiversity, bank erosion and clogging waterways
- Economic/infrastructure impacts include penetration of hard surfaces, pavement, roads, foundations, other structures, drainage and septic systems
- Extremely vigorous rhizomes, new outbreaks come from tiny fragments of rhizome or stem

What does it look like?

- Sometimes called ornamental bamboo
- Reddish purple-speckled hollow stems, 1.5-6 metres tall
- Of the four species, Himalayan is the shortest and Giant Knotweed the tallest
- Leaves are egg or heart-shaped with pointed tips (except Himalayan which is lance-shaped); approx. 8-10 cm wide/15 cm long (except Giant Knotweed which is twice the size)
- Flowers August-September in small white/green clusters
- Can be easily confused with elderberry, bamboo or black cottonweed/poplar



Habitat and biology

- Perennial shrub-like herb from rhizomes; Polygonaceae (buckwheat) family
- Found especially in disturbed soil and open habitats; roadsides, watercourses, gardens and drainage systems
- Reproduces primarily by rhizome and some seed production (especially Bohemian); reproduces also from stems fragments and buds in root crowns
- Overwintering rhizomes spread rapidly, extending 15-20m laterally, to a depth of 3m; can remain dormant up to 20 years
- Dispersal: primarily by rhizome and fragments of stem, through human activities and by water

Proper disposal

- Specialized regional disposal bins for incineration; *please contact us below for knotweed disposal*
- Hartland Landfill may accept knotweed for disposal by permit as part of its controlled waste program: www.crd.bc.ca/controlledwaste
- **Do not compost**



Knotweed stem

What should you do if you spot a knotweed plant?

- **Report it!** Please report any sightings of this species to the contacts listed at the bottom left of this page
- **Spread the word, not the weed:** don't purchase, grow or trade knotweed
- **Contact:** There is a special treatment program for this species in the capital region. Please contact us or your local government (below) for assistance with treating and disposing of this species
- **Avoid:** digging and cutting this species as this can cause further spread
- **Wash:** plant parts and seeds from vehicles, equipment and personal gear before leaving infested sites
- **Dispose:** of any knotweed parts and contaminated soils in the proper manner (below)
- **Monitor:** knotweed sites to avoid spread and for ongoing treatment until eradicated
- **Soil and gravel:** use soil and gravel that are not contaminated and follow safe procedures to treat or dispose of contaminated soils and gravel
- **Pesticides:** depending on what jurisdiction you are in, a pesticide permit may be required for treatment



Himalayan knotweed

CONTACT INFORMATION

P: 250.360.3302
E: invasive@crd.bc.ca
www.reportaweedbc.ca
www.crd.ca/invasive

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