

Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) is an aggressive invasive weed found throughout Britain. The plant was introduced to Britain in 1825 and was first found growing in the wild in 1886. There has been rapid spread of Japanese knotweed since and it is now found in gardens, by roads and waterways, on wasteland, farm and croft land all over the country. Here in the Highlands it has become a worrying problem in many urban and rural locations.

Facts

- The 'roots' are underground stems up to three metres deep and seven metres long.
- All plants in Britain are female. The plant does not produce viable seed but spreads through vegetative means.
- A piece of stem or root the size of a fingernail can root like a cutting and create a new plant.
- A large number of Japanese knotweed stands come from dumped soil or plant material.
- It is illegal to plant or cause the plant to grow in the wild.



INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES



Japanese knotweed IN THE HIGHLANDS



More information

- **Websites**
Non-Native Species Secretariat - www.nonnativespecies.org
This site has information and links to other useful sites.
Scottish Environment Protection Agency - www.sepa.org.uk
Download a copy of "On Site Management of Japanese knotweed and Associated Soils"

- **Books**
The Japanese Knotweed Manual
Lois Child and Max Wade, 2000
Packard Publishing
ISBN 1 85341 127 2

- **Recording**
All records should be submitted to the Highland Biological Recording Group www.hbrg.org.uk

This is one in a series of four leaflets produced by the Highland Invasive Species Forum. The others are Non-native Invasive Species in the Highlands, Rhododendron, and Mink.

For further information contact:
Highland Council Biodiversity Officer
T: 01463 702274.
www.highlandbiodiversity.com
Large print version available

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All photos by James Merryweather, www.UJKferns.org.uk

Why is it a problem?

Japanese knotweed grows tall and fast shading out all other plants in that environment and replaces them with one species of very low wildlife value. The dense forest of stems can make an area of park or garden, riverbank or farm unusable. The stems of Japanese knotweed can come up through concrete, roads and pavements and even through walls causing damage to property. Treatment and control is expensive and can take many years.

Where development is taking place or a house is being built it can cost tens of thousands of pounds to remove all traces of the plant to prevent future damage.

Tips to prevent spread

- **Do** control any infestation quickly.
- Please **Don't** dispose of Japanese knotweed at refuse tips, in the countryside or 'over the hedge'.



- **Do** leave any cut stems or dug roots on site to dry out and destroy them later by burning.
- Please **Don't** move any soil containing roots.
- **Do take advice before beginning work on a house or other construction site if there is knotweed present. If not eradicated first, it can come through the foundations!**

The Law

Under section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is illegal to plant or otherwise cause the spread of Japanese knotweed into the wild.

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Japanese knotweed is listed as 'Controlled Waste' requiring a licence to be transported and infected material to be taken to licensed disposal sites of which there are none in Scotland.

Who is responsible for control in Highland?

The landowner or tenant of the land has the responsibility for the control of knotweed on his or her land. The Highland Council or other agencies are not obliged to control knotweed on behalf of other landowners.

Where knotweed is spreading onto neighbouring land or crosses an ownership boundary, co-operation is the best solution. Where there is a dispute the Environmental Protection Act 1990 does provide some legal support if knotweed is causing a nuisance to private property. A private nuisance has been defined as an "unlawful interference with a person's use or enjoyment of land, or some right over, or in connection with it."

How is it controlled?

Digging — This can only be effective on new plants with an undeveloped root system and may take several years. The roots of a mature plant often go too deep to be hand dug.

Pulling and cutting —

Removing the stem repeatedly each year will reduce growth by over 90%.

Cutting is unlikely to kill the plant completely. Cut material must be dried out on site and then is best burnt.



Spraying — This is the most effective method but can take three to five years to be completely effective and then the area should be checked each year after that.

Injection — This is a method of injecting the chemical solution directly into the hollow stem. This technique is useful on sensitive or difficult sites e.g. in a garden border or on conservation sites.

Biological control — This is being investigated but is not currently available.

Take note

- Spraying near water requires permission from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.
- Spraying on land that is not your own requires certification from the National Proficiency Test Council or LANTRA.
- Glyphosate based chemicals are effective and can be used safely. **Always read the label.**

