

# Managing Japanese Knotweed

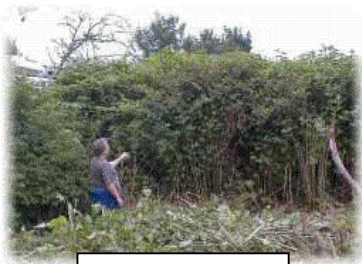
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This invasive plant is becoming more common and as well as being physically damaging it is also covered by legislation as a controlled waste.

## What is it?

Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) was introduced to the UK from Asia in the nineteenth century as an ornamental plant. It is a large, robust perennial that spreads rapidly to form dense thickets in a range of habitats, particularly roadsides, riverbanks and derelict land. The plant has a strong rhizome root system, which can be up to 2m deep and several metres away from the parent plant, growing in dense thickets to a height of 2-3m. The plant can spread by cut stems or underground via the root system.



## What is the problem?



Penetrating a dry, stone wall

### For existing habitats:

- grows densely and shades out native plants.
- the accumulation of litter prevents native seeds from germinating.
- provides poor habitat for insects, birds & mammals.
- increases the risk of soil erosion & bank instability following die back in the autumn.
- increases risk of flooding through dead stems washed into & clogging up watercourses.

### For human activity:

- strong enough to penetrate asphalt, walls, foundations and drainage pipes.
- restricts access to riverbanks for anglers, bank inspection and amenity use.

## What does the law say?

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 - it is illegal to spread Japanese Knotweed. Any excavated soil from areas where the plant has established must be disposed of at a licensed landfill site and not reused.
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990 - places a duty of care on all waste producers and Japanese Knotweed is identified as a controlled waste. This means it has to be dealt with within your legislative requirement for waste management.

## How do you deal with it?

There is no quick, easy or cheap way of controlling Japanese Knotweed. Control of Japanese Knotweed relies on the death of the extensive rhizome system, which usually takes a number of years. BUT... it should not be ignored because the legislation makes it your responsibility.

Identification is the most important step (see page 2). It is then advisable to seek guidance from your Environmental Co-ordinator and the Environment Agency or a specialist in Japanese Knotweed control.

## Contacts:

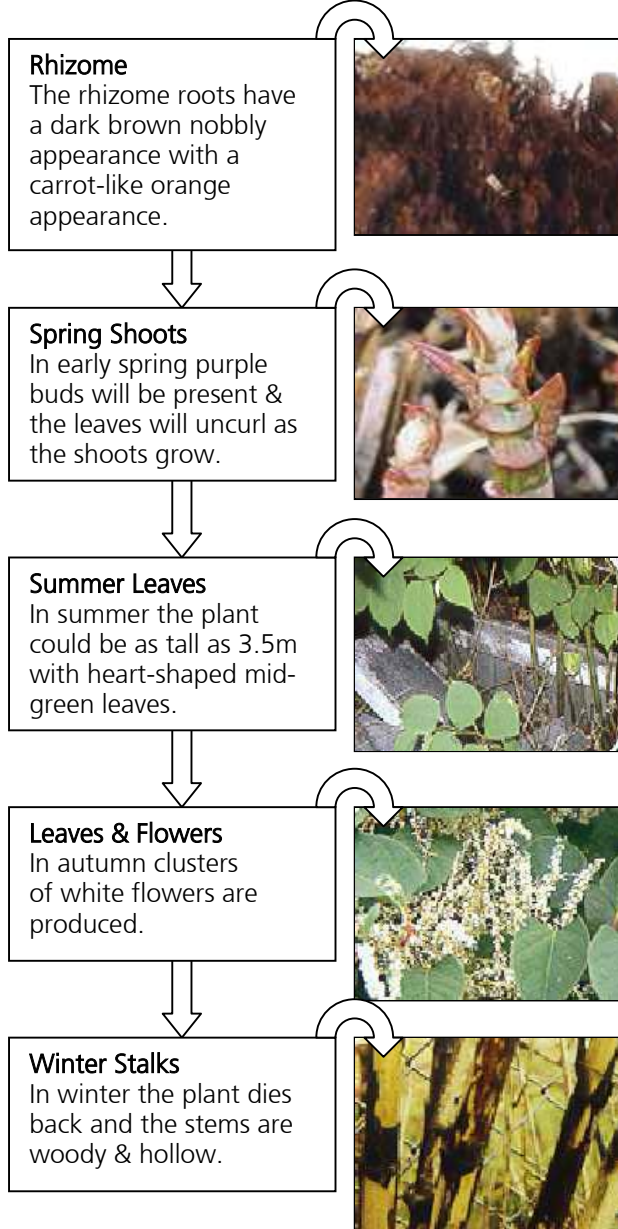
- Environment Agency web site at [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)
- Elcot Environmental. Specialist Japanese Knotweed Control. Jake Whiteside Tel: 01793 716303

# Managing Japanese Knotweed

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## Japanese Knotweed Identification



## Checklist

	Features	Yes	No
<b>RHIZOME</b>	Breaks easily		
	Centre is pale orange/yellow with rust coloured or hollow core		
	Outside is dark, leathery bark		
	In early spring pink buds at nodes		
	When young – white & soft.		
<b>STEM</b>	Breaks easily – hollow like bamboo		
	In spring, purple/red colour with curled leaves		
	In summer/autumn, green with purple speckles, up to 3.5m tall		
	In winter, hollow & woody		
<b>LEAVES</b>	In spring, curled up & pinky-red		
	In summer, heart-shaped, flattened out at the base & mid-green		
<b>FLOWERS</b>	Appear late summer/autumn		
	Cream/white coloured		
	Grow in drooping clusters		
<b>HABITAT</b>	Any but often steep banks, riverbanks & brownfield sites		
<b>SOIL</b>	Any soil conditions. Will often be on ash/acid soils		
<b>GENERAL</b>	Found in dense stands & crowns (top of root system) extends above ground		

*If **YES** is greater than **NO** – Treat as Japanese Knotweed or get a 2<sup>nd</sup> opinion from your site co-ordinator.*

## Japanese Knotweed – Do's & Don'ts

- Do's***
- Try to identify Japanese Knotweed as early as possible.
  - Act responsibly in preventing its spread.
  - Call your Environmental Co-ordinator or specialist in early.

- Don'ts***
- Chip or flail as fragments of stem can easily re-grow.
  - Spread soil contaminated with knotweed. Remember soil several metres away could be contaminated.
  - Build on a site where untreated knotweed is present.
  - Waste time, as a control programme may take time to devise & implement.