

# Japanese Knotweed

(*Fallopia japonica*)



## Key ID Features

**Arrangement:** alternate

**Leaves:** simple, smooth edge, broad, heart shaped

**Flowers:** spikes of small white flowers

**Fruit:** tiny and winged

**Stem:** smooth, hollow, jointed; reddish young stalks; dead, brown stalks persist into winter

**Root:** rhizomes

**Growth Habit:** herbaceous perennial growing 3-10 ft. tall



## The Impact

Japanese Knotweed was introduced to the United States from Europe in the late 1800s. Similar in appearance to bamboo, it was originally introduced as an ornamental plant and is commonly found along waterways. It can establish new colonies from a small piece of root or stem. It also spreads when contaminated soil is transported by humans. It grows fast, is extremely persistent, and hard to eradicate.

Knotweed forms dense thickets that prevent native species from growing and since the soil under knotweed is often bare, it can make river banks especially susceptible to erosion. It re-sprouts easily from its rhizomes, and creates thick fibrous stems that are slow to decompose.

Japanese Knotweed stands reduce species diversity, alter natural ecosystems, and negatively impact wildlife habitat. In addition to these ecological impacts, it can have economic impacts by its ability to grow through pavement and damage infrastructure.

## Quick Facts

**Plant Family:** Polygonaceae

**Origin:** Eastern Asia

**Habitat:** disturbed areas, meadows and fields, commonly found along roadsides

**Present in Vermont?:** yes

**Method of Spread:** rhizome or stem (can regrow from just 5 grams of plant material)

**Status:** Class B Noxious Weed\*  
<http://bit.ly/VTPlantQuarantine>

\*The Vermont Noxious Weed Quarantine listing means it is illegal to buy, sell, or transport this species in Vermont

## Invasive: Japanese Knotweed



## Common Look-alikes

Horsetail



Ornamental Bamboo



### Distinguishing features

**Size:** smaller; grows to be 3 ft. tall

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**Leaf:** narrow and lance shaped

## Native Plant Alternatives



**Common Elderberry**  
(*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *canadensis*):  
attracts birds; grows in a variety of moist soils; berries are edible



**Common Milkweed**  
(*Asclepias syriaca*):  
attracts butterflies, bees, and moths; grows in a variety of soils

## Control Information

To learn more about identification & control options, check out the Gallery of Land Invasives on [VTinvasives.org](http://VTinvasives.org) and these additional resources:

[http://nyis.info/invasive\\_species/japanese-knotweed/](http://nyis.info/invasive_species/japanese-knotweed/)

[http://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/OIPC\\_BMP\\_JapaneseKnotweed.pdf](http://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/OIPC_BMP_JapaneseKnotweed.pdf)

References: [EDDMaps Ontario - Species - Japanese Knotweed](#), [Ontario's Invading Species Awareness Program - Japanese Knotweed](#), [New York Invasive Species Information - Japanese Knotweed](#), [Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources - Japanese Knotweed](#), [Ohio State University Weed Guide - Japanese Knotweed](#)

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