

KNOTWEED

invasive
fact sheet



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Japanese knotweed invades the banks of Vermont's rivers, streams and lakes. It is **easy to see in August** when its white flowers bloom.



© John Randall/The Nature Conservancy



Japanese knotweed



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lacy white flowers trailing down stem

new growth looks like red asparagus stalks

rounded, heart-shaped leaves



© John Randall/The Nature Conservancy

The Problem

- ◆ While bees are attracted to knotweed flowers, the plant is untouched by most native insects. As knotweed populations replace native trees, shrubs, grasses and sedges, native insect populations are reduced. Insect populations are a primary food source for fish, birds and mammals.
- ◆ River shores that are populated by native vegetation are less susceptible to erosion. A combination of native plants has a more complex root structure and can retain soil.
- ◆ Knotweed can re-sprout from a small piece of the rhizome (root) or stem. New colonies are easily established on rivers or from contaminated soils used for road repair or construction projects.

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Mechanical removal:

Cut stalks at least once per month throughout the growing season. Use a scythe, loppers or even a lawn mower, depending upon the ground surface you are working on. Repeat cuts for five years. Do not replant until the knotweed is under control and the plants are much smaller and have lost their vigor. Replant with good sized natives.

Chemical removal:

For small infestations: Cut stalks of knotweed in late June. Cut again after August 1 and drip a 18-25% glyphosate herbicide* solution into the stems. An injector gun can also be used for application.

For larger infestations: Cut the plants back in June. In late summer, when other populations are flowering, use a low-volume foliar spray of 3-8% glyphosate. Spray only on non-windy days and in patches that are absent of native species. Any time you are near water, use aquatic formulations. The following year, spot-treat remaining plants.

Knotweed Management Tips:

- **Have a strong will! Knotweed is notoriously difficult to remove.**
- **Small parts of the rhizome (root) or stalk can re-sprout and start new colonies.**
- **Small patches can be successfully eradicated, but it takes years of persistent effort.**
- **Organize a group of volunteers that can work together on larger patches.**
- **When possible, bag cut plants. Let rot in the bag for a year before disposing of the bags in a landfill.**
- **If bagging is not possible, pull plants into a pile and cover with a tarp to rot.**
- **When working near a body of water, pull back cut plants above the flood lines.**

DO NOT COMPOST THIS PLANT! Plant fragments can re-sprout.

Safe Chemical Application

- ✓ **The label found on the herbicide container is the law.** Read this label in its entirety. It will teach you what concentrations to use, what protective clothing to wear, how to apply the product, and what environmental and human health hazards are associated with the chemical. Improperly used herbicides can cause both short- and long-term health and environmental problems. More is not better! Pesticide labels can be found at <http://www.msds.com/>.
- ✓ **Use aquatic formulations within 10 feet of water.** You need a permit to apply herbicides in wetlands. You cannot apply herbicides within 100 feet of a wellhead. Contact VT DEC at 802-241-3761 for more information.
- ✓ **You need to be certified to apply herbicides on land that you do not own.**
- ✓ **Hire a contractor to manage large infestations.** A good contractor will have the knowledge to help create a good management plan. For a list of certified contractors, contact the Department of Agriculture at 802-828-3482.
- ✓ **Develop an Integrated Plant Management approach.** Use chemical control as only ONE piece of your prevention and management strategy.



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