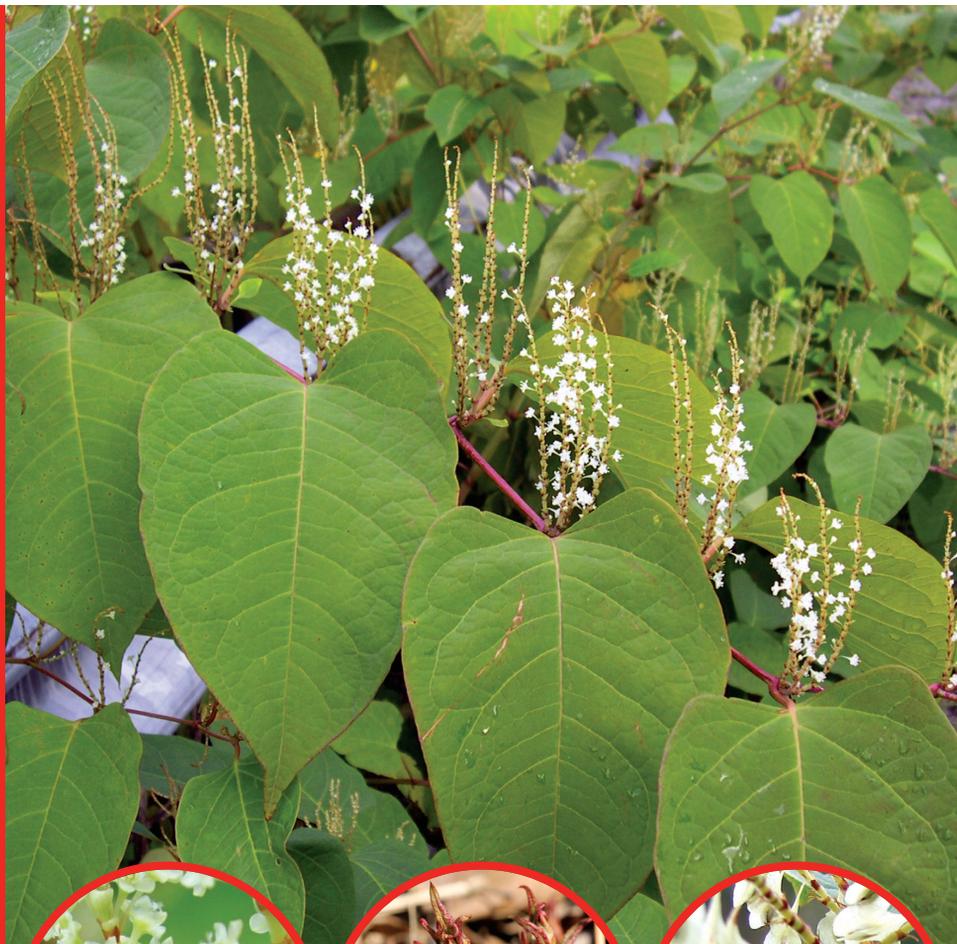


Japanese Knotweed Complex



flowers



shoots



fruit

Japanese Knotweed Complex

Names: Japanese, Giant & Himalayan knotweed

Genus: Fallopia

Species: cuspidatum, sachalinense, polystachyum

Priority Listing: 1B

Perennial

Japanese knotweed complex is made up of three different species: *Polygonum cuspidatum*, *P. sachalinense*, *P. polystachyum*. Japanese knotweed species are native to eastern Asia and were introduced into the United States during the 1800's as **ornamentals**, and were used for erosion control because of their extensive **rhizomatous** root system.

Knotweeds grow in areas that are close to water; near streams, rivers, irrigation ditches and wetlands. It can also be found in other areas where soil has been disturbed such as roadsides, vacant lots, and around old homesteads.

All of the species have very similar characteristics; leaves are alternate and heart shaped. There is a thin transparent covering at each node which can also be used for identification. Of the species, giant

knotweed is the largest; the leaves of this plant can grow up to 1' long or longer and can be 2/3 as wide as they are long. Japanese knotweed leaves grow up to 6" in length and can be 3 to 4" in width, whereas Himalayan knotweed's heart shaped leaves grow to be 4 to 8" long and have soft hairs on the underside of the leaf and tips that are often **elongated**.

The stem of this plant can grow up to 12' tall. Stems are smooth, hollow, and swollen where each leaf is attached. Knotweeds produce small green to white flowers from August to September that form clustered spikes at the ends of branches. Flowers make either pollen or seeds and pollen flowers are on separate plants than seed flowers.

The flowers of Japanese knotweed are the largest of the three species and increase significantly in size with the age of the plant. Upon pollination, tiny black ribbed seeds are produced. This plant reproduces through seed and by its extensive rhizomatous root system, making it difficult to control. Knotweed plants are **toxic** to cattle, horses, and goats if eaten.

Photo courtesy of Barbara Tokarska-Guzik, University of Silesia, Bugwood.org



Elongated: longer than wider; being long and slender

Ornamental: a plant that serves a purpose or ornament, or is grown for show

Perennial: a plant whose life spans several years

Rhizomes: a perennial underground stem that usually grows horizontally

Toxic: poisonous quality based upon poisonous substances at the cellular level of organisms