

Biodiversity Series

Invasive knotweeds and Regulations

If you are a Local Authority or Public Body in Ireland, this information affects you

Introduction

Invasive non-native knotweeds are a group of plants that can grow vigorously and are easily spread from tiny fragments of the plant. They negatively impact on:

- **biodiversity**
- **flooding & water quality**
- **infrastructure & development**

The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 contain important new provisions to address the problem of invasive species. The threat of Invasive knotweeds is relevant to all with obligations on local authorities, public bodies, contractors etc. and how they manage invasive knotweed species.

The 4 invasive & regulated knotweed species are:

1. Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*)
2. Giant knotweed (*Fallopia sachalinensis*)
3. Bohemian knotweed (*Fallopia x bohemica*)
a hybrid of the first two
4. Himalayan knotweed (*Persicaria wallichii*)



Photo courtesy of Trevor Renals

What do these Regulations mean for a local authority?

Public authorities must ensure that they are compliant with the Regulations. Activities which public authorities or their contractors undertake which may be relevant to Regulations 49 and 50 include:

- **Hedge cutting**
- **Movement of soil**
- **Infrastructure development**
- **Landscaping**
- **Procurement**
- **Planning (development control & forward planning)**

If charged with any offence under these Regulations it must be proven in defence that the accused took 'all reasonable steps and exercised due diligence to avoid committing the offence'.



Japanese knotweed. Photos a—c by Colette O' Flynn, Photo d courtesy of Trevor Renals

For more information or to access distribution maps for your area go to:

<http://invasives.biodiversityireland.ie>

Japanese knotweed, and the Regulations:

Key points

Regulation 49: Prohibition on introduction and dispersal of certain species

This places restrictions on the introduction of any plant species listed in Part 1 of the Third Schedule. A person shall be guilty of an offence if they: **plant, disperse, allow or cause to disperse, spread or cause to grow** the plant in the Republic of Ireland.

Regulation 49 addresses both plants and animals but only plants addressed here.

Regulation 50: Prohibition on dealing in and keeping certain species

Section 50 of the Regulations make it an offence to or intend to: **import, buy, sell, breed, reproduce or propagate, advertise, offer or expose for sale, publish a price list, transport or distribute**; any animal or plant species or vector material listed in the Third Schedule.

Third Schedule, Part 3: Vector materials. Two vector materials are referred to. One is blue mussel seed and the second is:

Soil or spoil taken from places infested with Japanese knotweed, Giant knotweed, or their hybrid Bohemian knotweed.

Regulation 50 is not in effect until the date on which the Minister gives public notice of this.

The above activities can be undertaken in accordance with a granted licence.

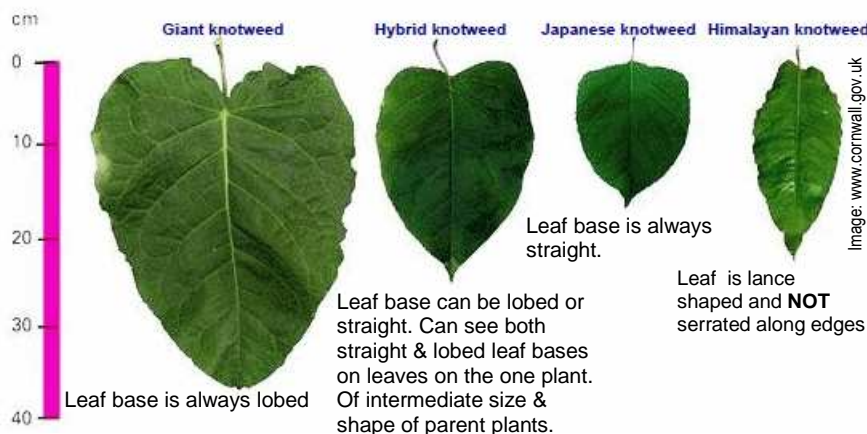
Note: Approximately 35 plants & 41 animals are listed in the Third Schedule Parts 1 & 2.

Download the Regulations:

www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2011/en.si.2011.0477.pdf

Key Identification Features

The four species are herbaceous perennial plants that look very similar to each other. They have hollow bamboo-like stems that are speckled red and have small white grouped flowers. The three Fallopia species have their leaves arranged along zig-zag stems. Fresh rhizome is brown outside, snaps easily, bright orange inside. The most distinguishable features are the leaf shape and size.



Managing land infested by invasive knotweeds in a timely and appropriate way can avoid:

- excessive cost
- potential prosecution and/or compensation claims
- physical damage to buildings and hard surfaces
- harm to the environment.

Management principle

| Management goal | Explanation |
|----------------------|---|
| Prevent | Prevent further introduction or spread by undertaking biosecurity measures |
| Detect | Detection and mapping of knotweed informs threat level and management approach |
| Eradicate | Eradicate stands of knotweed early in its invasion especially in priority high risk areas of spread and impact. The earlier the better for capacity and cost to eradicate |
| Control | Control areas of infestation from spread and further expansion |
| Good practice | Always employ good practice when managing any invasive non-native species. Badly planned or improper management can lead to further spread and prosecutions |
| Management toolkit | Access good practice management guidelines: http://invasivespeciesireland.com/toolkit/ |

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