

Japanese knotweed

Fallopia japonica

Invasive: High impact

Species profile

Habitat: Terrestrial. Most common along river banks and roadsides, also in urban areas such as waste ground, railways etc.

Distribution in Ireland: Widespread and common.

Status: Established.

Family name: Polygonaceae

Reproduction: Vegetative means, either fragments of rhizome or stem.

Identifying features

Leaves: 10-15cm in length, green, shield shaped with pointed tips and a flat base. Arranged in zig-zag formation.

Stem: Bamboo like stem, green with red/purple mottled colour, hollow.

Flowers: Small creamy/white in colour, appearing in later Summer and throughout Autumn.

Rhizome: White shoots emerging from the rhizome. Bright orange inside rhizome.



Stem is zig-zag formation
© Colette O' Flynn



Japanese knotweed in flower
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Japanese knotweed taking over side of public walkway
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Japanese knotweed

Invasive: High impact

Threats

Out-competes native species.

The species can increase soil erosion, in particular along river banks.

May cause structural impairment and can be very costly to remove from development sites.

Propagates (reproduces) easily so can colonise an area in a relatively short time.

Seasonal change

- Spring:** Red buds first appear then spearlike stems. Grows very quickly (up to 3m).
- Summer:** Main growing period, starting to flower.
- Autumn:** Still in flower.
- Winter:** Plant dies back leaving stand of dead brown stems.

Similar species

Giant knotweed (*Fallopia sachalinensis*)

Bohemian knotweed (*Fallopia x bohemica*)

Himalayan knotweed (*Persicaria wallichii*)



A stand of giant knotweed along a road side © O. Duffy



Japanese knotweed growing in an urban area © GBNNSS



Japanese knotweed on a river bank © GBNNSS



Newly emerging Japanese knotweed © GBNNSS



Dead hollow stems of Japanese knotweed © GBNNSS



Comparison of leaves (from left to right) giant knotweed, hybrid knotweed, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan knotweed". © O. Duffy

