Japanese Knotweed

Japanese knotweed was brought to Britain as an ornamental garden plant in the mid-nineteenth century. However since then it has become widespread in the wild and causes serious problems by displacing native flora and causing structural damage.

Legislation: The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 provides the primary controls on the release of non-native species into the wild in Great Britain. **It is an offence under section 14(2) of the Act to 'plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild' any plant listed in Schedule 9, Part II. This includes Japanese Knotweed.**

There are 3 species of invasive knotweed in the UK.

Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) – the most widespread and troublesome bankside species.

Giant knotweed (*Fallopia sachalinensis*)

Hybrid knotweed (*Fallopia x bohemica)* – a cross between Japanese and giant knotweed.

Facts and figures

Native range: Eastern Asia

Stem: Up to 2-3m tall.
Green, with red or purple specks.
Forms dense cane-like clumps.

Leaves: Green, shield or heart-shaped, with a flat base.
Up to 120mm long.

Flowers: Creamy clusters borne on the tips of most stems.
August – October

Roots: Consist of rhizomes, which are yellow, when cut.
The rhizome system can reach 7m from the parent plant and can be up to 3m deep.

New plants: New plants can grow from a piece of rhizome the size of a little finger nail and the crown, located at the base of the stem will also produce new plants.

Control: Near water **chemical** control can be achieved with herbicides containing glyphosate. Spraying both the top and underside of leaves improves control.

Cutting: should be done extremely carefully using a hand sythe to avoid spreading stem fragments. Flail mowing must not be carried out. Continue cutting every 2-4 weeks to reduce both above and below ground biomass.

Pulling: Uproot stems by pulling from the base – best done from June onwards.

Grazing: Grazing of shoots by horses, sheep and goats keeps the plants in check, provided previous dead growth is removed.

Digging: Digging out rhizomes and disposing of the spoil is an expensive option and often impracticable. The spoil can be removed from a site as special waste, disposed on-site at least 10m deep, or the material can be sieved through a 20mm mesh and the spoil reused on site.

Spring Cut new growth. Dig out rhizomes or spray new growth with Glyphosate. Excavate soil and dispose of on site or take to landfill as special waste, under license.

Summer Cut new growth. Dig out rhizomes or spray with glyphosate.

Autumn Cut new growth. Dig out rhizomes and spray with glyphosate. This is the most effective time for glyphosate application.

Disposal: The stems die back in winter but take up to 3 years to decompose. Japanese knotwood crowns should **neither be composted nor removed from a site without a waste license.** Burn cut stems on site or bury 10m deep.

Useful links:

http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profiles0604/japanese_knotweed.asp

http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/knotweed/japforum.htm