



Comox Valley Invasive Species Alert Knotweed

Knotweed species

- Japanese (*Fallopia japonica*)
- Bohemian (*F. x Bohemicum*)
- Giant Knotweed (*F. Sachalinense*)
- Himalayan (*Polygonum polystachum*)



The spread of non-native invasive plants has serious ecological, economic and social/health impacts. The four local governments (Town of Comox, City of Courtenay, Village of Cumberland and the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) and the Coastal Invasive Species Committee appreciate the cooperation of all residents to address Giant Hogweed infestations. Local professionals can assist with the special treatment required for this toxic species.

Why is knotweed a problem?

- One of the world's worst invasive species and a top-ten invasive species for eradication in BC
- Dense stands eliminate all other vegetation and are extremely difficult to eradicate
- Ecological impacts include fish and wildlife habitat, biodiversity, bank erosion and clogging waterways
- Economic/Infrastructure impacts include penetration of hard surfaces such as pavement, damaging roads, foundations, other structures and drainage systems
- Extremely vigorous rhizomes; new outbreaks from fragments of rhizome or stems



What does it look like?

- Sometimes called ornamental bamboo; reddish/purple specked hollow stems, 1.5 to 6m tall. Of the 4 species, Himalayan is the smallest and Giant Knotweed the tallest
- Leaves egg to heart-shaped with pointed tip (except Himalayan which is lance-shaped), alternate, stalked; approx. 8-10 cm wide/15 cm long (except Giant Knotweed which is twice the size)
- Flowers (August-September) small white/green clusters



Distribution

- Native to eastern Asia
- Outbreaks in many regions in BC

Could be confused with

- Elderberry (*Sambucus* spp.) with lance-shaped, toothed leaves
- Bamboo species



Spread the *Word*
Not the *Weed*

Reporting & assistance in the CVRD: Call 1-844-298-2532
Email info@coastalisc.com
Provincial Report-a-Weed: www.reportaweedbc.ca



Stand of Giant Knotweed

Comox Valley Invasive Species Alert Knotweed



Knotweed stem

Habitat and biology

- Perennial shrub-like herb from rhizomes; Polygonaceae (buckwheat) family
- Found especially in disturbed soil and open habitats; roadsides, watercourses, gardens and drainage systems
- Reproduction primarily by rhizome and some seed production (especially Bohemian); reproduces also from stems fragments and buds in root crowns
- Overwintering rhizomes spread rapidly, extending 15-20m laterally, to a depth of 3m; can remain dormant up to 20 years
- Dispersal: primarily by rhizome and fragments of stem, through human activities and by water

What should you do?

Please report any sightings of this species to the contacts below.

- **Spread the word, not the weed:** don't purchase, grow or trade knotweed
- **Contact:** There is a special treatment program for this species in the CVRD. Please contact the Coastal Invasive Species Committee (below) for assistance with treating and disposing of this species
- **Avoid:** digging and cutting this species as this can cause further spread
- **Wash:** plant parts and seeds from vehicles, equipment and personal gear before leaving infested sites
- **Dispose:** of any knotweed parts and contaminated soils in the proper manner (below)
- **Monitor:** knotweed sites to avoid spread and for ongoing treatment until eradicated
- **Soil and gravel:** use soil and gravel that are not contaminated and follow safe procedures to treat or dispose of contaminated soils and gravel
- **Pesticides:** depending on what jurisdiction you are in, a pesticide permit may be required for treatment.

Proper Disposal

- It's best to have a professional remove this plant for you. However if you remove knotweed yourself, alert the landfill attendees and they will ensure proper disposal.
- **DO NOT COMPOST KNOTWEED!** Home composting is likely to spread the problem.

With thanks to the District of Saanich Photo Credit: District of Saanich

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