

Knotweed



Knotweed is a problem because it is not native and has no known diseases, competitors or predators to control its growth. Knotweed discourages the growth of native plants by altering the availability of sunlight, moisture and nutrients. Wildlife habitat is affected because of the prevention of growth of native plants that wildlife depends on for food and shelter. Knotweed can regenerate from pieces of root as small as $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch.

Knotweed can be easily identified at this time of year with its bright white long flowers on very large stalks and broad leaves. This shrub can grow up to 10 feet tall and forms dense colonies like bamboo. The leaves are dark green and heart-shaped with a pointed tip.

Besides being found along the rivers and streams, knotweed grows in many other habitats, including roadway edges, agricultural areas, and abandoned lots.

Control

Controlling knotweed is time consuming and requires persistence and vigilance. Regardless of method used for control, it will likely take 3 or more years to completely eradicate knotweed from a site.



Plants should be cut to the ground level using loppers or similar tools. It is most effective if done every 2-3 weeks until plants die. After it is cut, the next step is crucial, because improper disposal can lead to new infestations. Pile the cuttings on plastic or other impermeable surface and allow them to dry out completely. Monitor the plants, especially the crowns to make sure they don't re-sprout. Allow all parts of the plants to die, after-which they may be burned. Or bury the plants 10 feet deep.



Another option for removing knotweed is to dig up the plants, including ALL of the roots. Plants can re-sprout from the rhizomes so be sure to remove the entire root system and inspect for new growth. This method is best used on small stands.

It is easier to keep knotweed out than to remove it. Destroy knotweed as soon as it is observed. Work with your neighbors especially those who are up-stream of you.

For additional information or questions, please contact Peter Nichols, Stream Program Manager, at (518) 234-4092



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