

**Impacts:**

Japanese knotweed spreads quickly to form dense thickets that exclude native vegetation and greatly alter natural ecosystems. It poses a significant threat to riparian areas, where it can survive severe floods and is able to rapidly colonize scoured shores and islands. Once established, populations are extremely persistent.



**Suspected Means of Introduction:**

Japanese knotweed was probably introduced to the U.S. in the late 1800's. It was first introduced as an ornamental and has also been used for erosion control and for landscape screening.

# BioBullies

## Japanese Knotweed

*Fallopia japonica*



**Description:** Japanese knotweed is a dense growing herbaceous perennial, reaching heights over 10 feet. The semi-woody stem is hollow and has enlarged nodes, making it resemble bamboo. It is recognized by its extremely dense growth form, often occurring in large monocultures. It has large, alternate, dark-green leaves and panicles of minute, white flowers. Although leaf size may vary, they are normally about 6 inches long by 3 to 4 inches wide and can be broadly oval to somewhat triangular and pointed at the tip. The minute, greenish-white flowers occur in attractive, branched sprays in mid to late summer and are followed soon after by small, winged fruits. Knotweed is one of the few invasives to bloom so late into the growing season.

**Native Range:**  
East Asia

**Resources for  
Identification and  
Control of Japanese  
Knotweed**

Headwaters Invasive  
Plant Partnership

University of Illinois  
Extension - Champaign,  
Ford, Iroquois, and  
Vermilion Counties

Plant Profile Database -  
USDA

Weed of the Week - USDA  
Forest Service

Midwest Invasive Plant  
Network



# Japanese Knotweed

## *Fallopia japonica*



**Habitat:** Japanese knotweed can tolerate a variety of adverse conditions including full shade, high temperatures, high salinity, and drought. It is found near water sources, such as streams and rivers, in low-lying areas, waste places, utility rights-of-way, and disturbed areas.

**Biology:** Japanese knotweed spreads primarily by vegetative means with the help of its long, stout rhizomes. It is often transported to new sites as a contaminant in fill dirt or on construction equipment. It can also be distributed by water, and to a lesser extent, by the wind. Escapees from neglected gardens and discarded cuttings are common routes of dispersal from urban areas.

**Control Methods:** The most widely used method to control large established stands of Japanese knotweed is a combination of mechanical and chemical control. Mechanical control (cutting) may be effective in controlling small, unestablished populations. Care must be taken to avoid placing viable plant material in areas that may lead to further infestation. Once cut, stalks should be placed on non-permeable materials to prevent spread. Once the plant is dried, dead stalks should be burned. Manual control alone is not an effective long term control method and may actually exacerbate the problem by encouraging new growth from rhizome segments.