



FOCUS: JAPANESE KNOTWEED

☐ Pest☐ Disease☐ Beneficial☒ Weed☐ Crop

WHAT IS KNOTWEED?

Japanese knotweed, a persistent, exotic invasive plant in the Pittsburgh region, can make gardening difficult if not impossible. Knotweed comes from Asia and according to the USDA, it was introduced in the late 1800s as an ornamental. It's a wildly successful plant, tolerating a wide range of soil types and pH, and it quickly colonizes land that is not constantly tended. It easily outcompetes native plants. In Pittsburgh, you'll find it on roadsides, by the river, on steep banks, beside houses and sidewalks, on vacant lots, and in yards – basically everywhere!

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Japanese knotweed looks somewhat similar to bamboo, with hollow stems. The leaves are oval and smooth, and the plants reach about 7-8 ft tall – up to 10 ft tall, in optimal conditions. Knotweed develops clusters of white flowers in the summer and on a positive note, it's regarded as an important source of nectar for bees.

HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

Knotweed spreads rapidly by seed or by root. Digging out the plant just encourages new ones to sprout, from rhizomes – masses of roots – left in the soil. These rhizomes can be found as deep as 10ft! Even herbicide chemicals are usually a temporary fix, due to the resilience of the plant. Additionally, the roots of knotweed secrete allelopathic chemicals, which impede the growth of other plants.

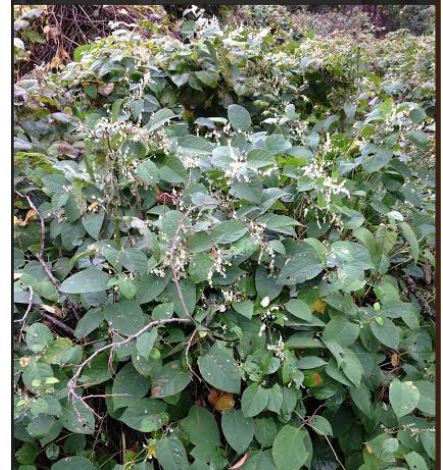
WHAT CAN I DO?

Since knotweed spreads and overtakes other plants, we recommend avoiding areas infested with knotweed, when planning your garden space. However, if a knotweed-filled area is your only option, here are a couple of ideas. Just be aware that knotweed control is an ongoing challenge.

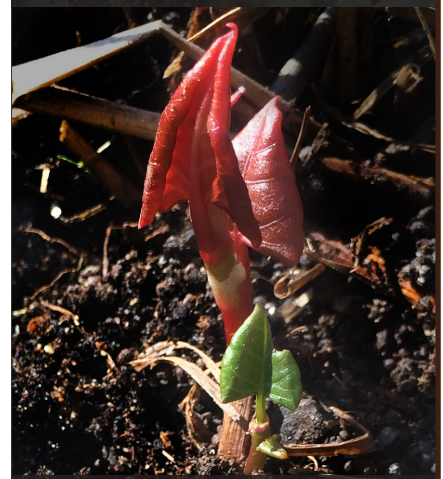
1. Remove as much knotweed and debris as possible from the garden area and place extra heavy landscape fabric or tarp over the site. The larger and thicker the material, the better. Weigh down the edges. Build raised beds and fill them with clean soil and compost. Mulch walkways heavily with woodchips.
2. Pumpkins have been known to restrict the growth of Japanese knotweed. Plant pumpkins around the border of the garden, or try using them to reduce the footprint of the knotweed, before preparing an area for planting.



KNOTWEED FLOWERS



KNOTWEED GROWS IN DENSE STANDS THAT CROWD OUT OTHER PLANTS



KNOTWEED SHOOT



KNOTWEED RHIZOME