

Identification

Japanese Knotweed is herbaceous perennial that can grow to up to 3 metres in height. The cane-like stems are green with reddish/purple speckles. Large green heart shaped or oval leaves zig-zag from the stem.

Flowers are white sprays typically between August and October, followed by small winged fruits. The seeds are not productive.

Although the above ground part of the plant dies back in winter leaving brown hollow dead canes, the root system is still alive and continues to produce new growth in the root system (rhizome) below the ground.

The rhizome roots system is extensive and can reach a depth of 3 metres and extend out to 7 metres from the parent plant stem.

Japanese Knotweed rhizome root fragments, as small as 10mm, can produce new plants. This is how Japanese Knotweed spreads and soil containing its rhizome roots must be managed correctly

More information

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency

www.sepa.gov.uk

Scottish National Heritage

www.snh.gov.uk

Scottish Government

www.scotland.gov.uk



Knotweed leaves



Knotweed flowers



Knotweed stems

Japanese Knotweed



Renfrewshire
Council

Japanese Knotweed is a non-native plant species that was originally introduced into Britain around 1825 as an ornamental garden plant.

It has since become naturalised and is increasingly found on river banks, woodlands, grasslands, coastal areas, urban parks and private gardens.

It has also been known to grow through brickwork, tarmac and concrete.

Japanese Knotweed is not harmful to human health, but will displace plants that are naturally present and threaten biodiversity.

Responsibility

The management of Japanese Knotweed is the responsibility of the landowner or tenant.

Local authorities have no powers to enforce treatment of Japanese Knotweed and no requirement to undertake treatment of Japanese Knotweed, other than that growing on land owned by the local authority.

Local authorities cannot make recommendations regarding suitable Japanese Knotweed treatment contractors. However, there should be a selection of companies listed in local business directories.

Control

Chemical herbicide is the most successful way of getting rid of Knotweed as it kills off the rhizome roots system, but it may take three years to fully eradicate the plant.

Herbicides or weed killer products that are non-persistent in the environment (containing an active ingredient such as glyphosate) are widely available from most gardening stores.

The most effective time to apply the herbicide is between July and September when the plant is in leaf.

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding protective clothing and the safe and effective use of herbicides.

Digging up the rhizome roots is not recommended unless it is being carried out by an experienced contractor. All waste soil and materials must be disposed appropriately.

Soil may contain knotweed rhizomes within 7 metre radius from the plant stem. Care should be taken when digging in this zone as to prevent the spread of knotweed.

The correct disposal of this material is important as the stems and rhizome can easily take root and spread.

Shading out the Knotweed using plastic sheeting with the addition of a mulch or bark chipping can also help, but this is less effective than chemical treatment.

Legislation

You will not be prosecuted for having Japanese Knotweed growing on your land.

However, it is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 act to 'plant' or 'otherwise cause to grow in the wild' a number of non-native plant species, including Japanese Knotweed.

The Scottish Ministers, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Forestry Commissioners may enter into Species Control Agreements and Orders with landowners under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for species which are outside their native range.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 requires soil or materials containing Japanese Knotweed that you discard, intend to discard or are required to discard to be classified as controlled waste and must be disposed of at appropriately licensed landfills.

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency is responsible for regulating controlled wastes and would also require consultation under the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 for authorising the use of pesticides in or near water.