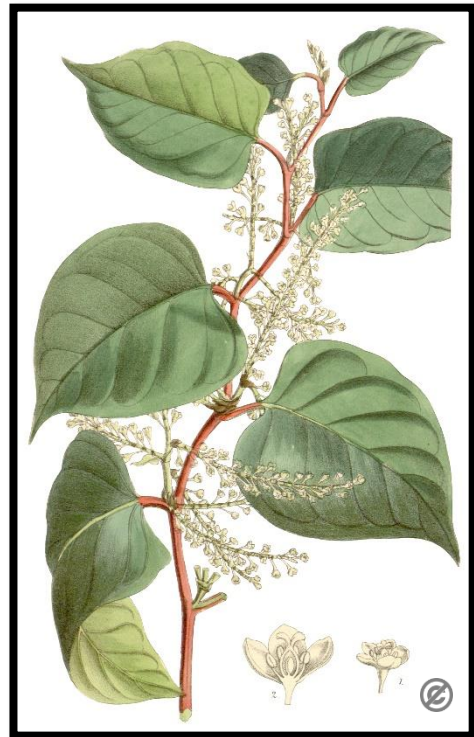


## *Fallopia japonica* – Japanese knotweed

### What is it?

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Japanese knotweed, sometimes referred to as donkey rhubarb for its sour red spring shoots, is a perennial plant in the Buckwheat family (Polygonaceae). It has large broad green leaves; tall, thick, sectioned and somewhat reddish zigzagging stems; and racemes of small papery flowers in summer.



Scientific names for Japanese knotweed are *Reynoutria japonica* and *Polygonum cuspidatum*.

### When does it grow?

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Shoots emerge from rhizomes (modified underground stems) from late March to mid-April. A spring freeze or deep frost can top kill new growth, but new shoots readily crop up from the hardy rootstalks. Growth continues rapidly once the weather begins to warm reaching heights up to 10 feet or greater by summer.



## Where is it from?

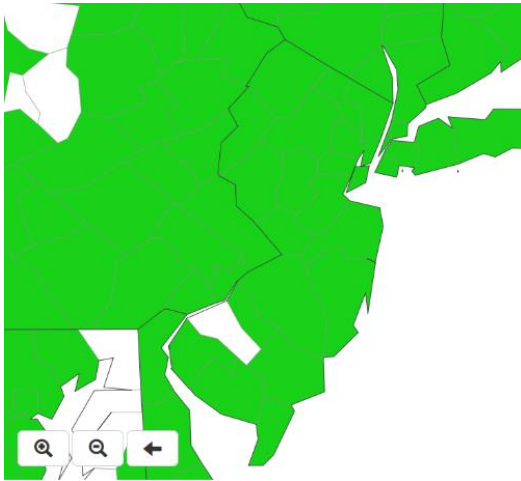
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Japanese knotweed is native to eastern Asia and was introduced to the United Kingdom in the 1800s as a vigorous garden ornamental. Before becoming illegal to plant in England it was horticulturally introduced from the UK to the United States.

## Where is it now?

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Japanese knotweed has been reported extensively in the northeastern U. S. and is currently present in all three counties (Hunterdon, Morris, and Somerset) within the Upper Raritan watershed where it continues to spread into moist disturbed areas along waterways.



## Why is it invasive?

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Although knotweed can spread by seed, it is most effective at spreading underground via rhizomes that extend outward as well as downward, producing new shoots up to 70 feet away. If detached from the plant, small fragments of rhizome can survive and produce new plants wherever they land. Cut stems can also root at the node. If buried the hardy rhizomes allow it to remain dormant underground for many years. There are accounts of it reemerging after being buried 7 feet deep and capped with concrete.

## How to report it

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If you discover Japanese knotweed cropping up in new spots on public lands or on your property, please report your sighting so that others may use this valuable information to research and track invasive species spread of this and other invasive species.

### **Report invasives at the national scale:**

EDD Maps (Early Detection and Distribution Mapping System) at <https://www.eddmaps.org/>

### **To report invasives at the state scale using a mobile device:**

NJISST (New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team) at <https://www.fohvos.info/invasive-species-strike-team/nj-invasives-app/>

## Who is it harming?

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Japanese knotweed can devastate areas along streams and rivers, not only by shading out native plant species but also by inhibiting their germination and growth with the chemicals it releases in the soil. The ecosystem is interrupted as native wildlife dependent upon native species of plants are displaced. Stream health is directly impacted due to runoff from bare ground beneath infestations of knotweed.



## How to control it

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Mechanical control is largely ineffective on its own and sometimes leads to the further spread of this highly resilient plant. Regular cuttings are shown to encourage rhizomatous growth and are not recommended unless the entire plant including the rhizome can be removed and properly disposed of. For tackling infestations of any size, please seek out ecologically informed control methods recommended by the NJ Invasive Species Strike Team, <https://www.fohvos.info/invasive-species-strike-team/info-center/>.

## How to replace it

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It is important to encourage native groundcover to recolonize the bare soil that knotweed leaves behind. Tall native wetland herbs, grasses and/or shrubs should also be planted to provide necessary shade and stream bank stabilization. See one example of a pairing below:

**Wild ginger**  
(*Asarum canadense*)



**Spicebush**  
(*Lindera benzoin*)



The Native Plant Society of New Jersey keeps an updated list of nurseries that sell NJ native plants. You can find the nursery most local to you in their list here: [http://www.npsnj.org/pages/nativeplants\\_Sources.html](http://www.npsnj.org/pages/nativeplants_Sources.html).