

Japanese, Bohemian, Giant
Fallopia spp (Polygonum spp)

One of the biggest threats to natural ecosystems in Saanich is the spread of invasive non-native plants. The District of Saanich appreciates the cooperation of all residents in removing knotweed from private property.

For assistance please contact:

On Private Land:

Saanich Environmental Services:
250-475-5471 or plansec@saanich.ca.

On Public Lands:

Saanich Parks:
250-475-5522 or parks@saanich.ca.



Why is knotweed a problem?

- Forms dense stands that crowd out all other vegetation; very difficult to eradicate once established; can cause soil erosion in riparian areas.
- Extremely vigorous rhizomes form a deep, dense mat extending up to 18m from parent plants, sending roots down 2m or more .
- Re-sprouts from root, rhizome or stem fragments as small as 1cm. Along streams, plant parts may fall into the water and start new infestations downstream; also spreads through transport of contaminated soils.
- Extremely aggressive, persistent and fast-growing plant, able to survive severe flooding and quickly colonize scoured stream banks. knotweed has been known to emerge through 5cm of asphalt.
- Clogs waterways and degrades wildlife and fish habitat.
- Large dry stems can become a fire hazard during dormant season.

What does it look like?

- Stout, hollow, stems 1-3m tall are reddish-brown and form dense clumps resembling bamboo; usually unbranched.
- Leathery leaves (10-15cm) are egg-shaped, alternate and form at swollen joints along the stem.
- Small white/green flowers form in plume-like clusters along stem and leaf axils from August – September.
- **Look for:** Larger leaves, alternate branching pattern.

Could be confused with:

Elderberry (*Sambucus* spp): somewhat similar, but has lance-shaped sharply toothed leaflets.

Note: Bohemian Knotweed is a hybrid of Japanese and Giant knotweeds. This is likely the dominant knotweed in BC.

Also known as: Mexican Bamboo, False Bamboo, Ornamental Bamboo, Elephant-ear Bamboo.

Distribution:

- Introduced as a garden ornamental from eastern Asia, knotweed has now naturalized and spread over many parts of North America. In BC, populations are established in southwest coastal regions, Columbia and Okanagan areas, and Haida Gwaii.
- Locally, knotweed occurs in several locations including Swan Lake.

Invasive Plant Alert



Other resources

Invasive Plant Council of BC
Coastal Invasive Plant Committee
King County Noxious Weed Program
Invasive Alien Plant Program

Habitat and biology:

- Perennial member of the Polygonaceae (buckwheat) family. Most common method of reproduction by far is vegetative via growth and fragmentation of rhizomes and stems. Japanese Knotweed plants produce mostly female flowers, Giant Knotweed mostly male, and the offspring of these two is the Bohemian Knotweed, now thought to be the dominant species in BC. The tiny seeds of this fertile hybrid (up to 100,000 seeds per stem) disperse via small winged fruits (achenes), often carried along waterways where they colonize downstream areas. Seeds can remain viable in deeper soils for up to 15 years.
- Prefers open habitats but tolerates a wide range of temperature, moisture and light conditions, acidity, soil types and nutrient regimes. Knotweed is found along roadsides, waterways, neglected gardens and unused areas, where it thrives and quickly becomes established on freshly disturbed soils.

What should you do?

Please report any sightings of this species to the contacts below.

- **Dig:** Small populations (<50 stems) can be dug up manually, taking care to remove as much of the root as possible.
- **Cut:** Persistent cutting and mowing will eventually exhaust roots. Be careful not to scatter stem or root fragments.
- **Cover:** After digging and cutting, cover area with heavy-duty geotextile fabric or black plastic; leave in place for 3-5 years.
- **Be vigilant:** Repeated and persistent treatments will be necessary for successful eradication. Monitor for re-growth in a 20m radius around infested area.
- **Wash all machinery** and vehicles that have been in an infested area.
- **Stream banks:** Other measures may be more appropriate on a stream bank. Contact Saanich Environmental Services for more information.
- **Spread the word** about knotweed and other invasive plants to your neighbours.

Proper Disposal

- The District of Saanich is in the process of developing options for invasive species disposal. Please call Environmental Services or check the website for updates www.invasives.saanich.ca.
- Currently, the best option is to place all plant parts in garbage bags labelled "invasive species" and take to Hartland Landfill.
- **DO NOT COMPOST!** Flowers can still form viable seeds after removal.

Who do you call?

Contact Saanich for assistance and more information about (species), other invasive plants and volunteer opportunities.

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On Public Lands:

Saanich Parks:

250-475-5522 or parcs@saanich.ca.

www.invasives.saanich.ca

Noxious Weeds Bylaw No. 8080:

The District of Saanich requires all landowners clear their property of any noxious weeds and other vegetation that could spread or become a nuisance