

# INVASIVE KNOTWEEDS



*Japanese, Bohemian,  
Giant Fallopia spp (Polygonum spp)*

INVASIVE PLANT ALERT



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 treating knotweed sites on private property. This is a unique species requiring special treatment.

***For assistance see contacts on reverse.***

## Why is knotweed a problem?

- One of the top-ten invasive species for eradication in BC
- Dense stands eliminate all other vegetation and is extremely difficult to eradicate
- Ecological impacts include destruction/threat to ecological processes, fish and wildlife habitat, biodiversity, causing bank erosion and clogging waterways
- Economic/Infrastructure impacts include penetration of pavement and other materials, damaging roads, foundations, retaining walls, other structures and drainage systems
- Extremely vigorous rhizomes; new plants can grow from small rhizome or stem fragments

***Considered one of the “world’s worst invasive species”***

**Knotweed species in Saanich: Japanese (*Reynoutria japonica*), Bohemian (*R. x bohemica*), Giant Knotweed (*R. sachalinensis*) and Himalayan (*Polygonum polystachyum*)**

## What does it look like?

- Sometimes called ornamental bamboo; hollow stems 2-3 m tall (smaller species) and 5 m tall (Giant Knotweed), reddish/purple speckled stems
- Leaves egg to heart-shaped with pointed tip, alternate, stalked; approx. 8-10 cm wide/15 cm long except for Giant Knotweed which is twice the size
- Flowers (August-September) small white/green clusters

## Could be confused with:

- Elderberry (*Sambucus spp.*), which has lance-shaped, toothed leaves
- Salal (*Gaultheria shallon*)
- Bamboo species

## Distribution:

- Native to eastern Asia
- Outbreaks in many regions in BC including a number of jurisdictions within the Capital Regional District.



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## Habitat and biology:

- Perennial shrub-like herb from rhizomes; Polygonaceae (buckwheat) family
- Found especially in disturbed soil and open habitats, roadsides, watercourses, gardens and drainage systems
- Reproduction is primarily by rhizome and some seed production (especially Bohemian); reproduces also from stem fragments and buds in root crowns
- Overwintering rhizomes spread rapidly and can extend 15-20 m laterally and to a depth of 3 m; remain dormant up to 20 years
- Dispersal is primarily by rhizome and fragments of stem and rhizome by human activities and by water

## What should you do?

- **Spread the word, not the plant:** do not purchase, grow, or trade knotweed, or move infected soil, avoid digging and cutting this species as this can cause further spread
- **Report:** please contact Saanich (as below) to report locations and to join Saanich's special (free) knotweed treatment program if you have an outbreak on your property
- **Remove:** If you have knotweed and are not part of Saanich's treatment program, please contact Saanich Parks (below) for disposal assistance. Please avoid digging and cutting this species as this can cause further spread
- **Clean:** stop spread of seeds and plant parts by brushing off clothing/shoes, tires and equipment before leaving the infested area
- **Monitor:** knotweed sites on private lands annually

## Small & Large Populations

- Please contact Saanich for treatment (as below).

**Note: pesticide use requires a permit in Saanich**

## Proper Disposal

- In Saanich there is a free treatment and disposal program. Please contact Saanich Parks, as below.
- **Note:** knotweed is restricted at Hartland Landfill, only authorized for disposal by advanced arrangement of a controlled waste permit
- **DO NOT COMPOST!** Home composting is likely to increase the spread of this species



## Who do you call?

Contact Saanich for assistance and more information about knotweed and other invasive plants and volunteer opportunities.

### Saanich Parks:

250-475-5522 or [parks@saanich.ca](mailto:parks@saanich.ca)

## Other resources

Report-a-Weed BC

<https://reportaweedbc.ca/>

Capital Region Invasive Species Program

<https://www.crd.bc.ca/education/concerns/invasive-species>

King County Noxious Weed Program

[www.kingcounty.gov/weeds](http://www.kingcounty.gov/weeds)

Saanich Native Plant List

[saanich.ca/environment](http://saanich.ca/environment) (tools & resources)