

## Help prevent the spread of Japanese Knotweed

If you find it on your land:

Do not move or dig soil within 7m of an infestation until sure the plant is dead for some time.

- If in hedges or lawns, do not cut the plant
- Do not dump or compost living remains of the plant, instead can kill them using fire, sunlight or by wrapping them in plastic.



*Even a thumb sized piece of root can cause a new infestation*

Further Information about Knotweed and other invasive species can be found at:

Invasive Species Ireland:  
+44 (0) 28 9027 8330 [www.invasivespeciesireland.ie](http://www.invasivespeciesireland.ie)

National Parks and Wildlife Service:  
LoCall 1890 202 021 [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)

Central Fisheries Board:  
(01) 8842 600  
[www.cfb.ie/fisheries\\_research/invasives/index.htm](http://www.cfb.ie/fisheries_research/invasives/index.htm)

Database of Alien Plants in Ireland  
[www.biochange.ie/alienplants](http://www.biochange.ie/alienplants)

Biology.ie - Nature's Calendar [www.biology.ie](http://www.biology.ie)



## Help us to fight the spread of this pest plant

We are trying to map the spread of Japanese Knotweed in County Galway, so please report any sightings to the 'People and Nature' project manager at the following address:

**Elaine O'Riordan**  
**Applied Ecology Unit,**  
**Centre for Environmental Science,**  
**NUI, Galway**

**Phone: 091-493863**

**Email: [elaine.oriordan@nuigalway.ie](mailto:elaine.oriordan@nuigalway.ie)**

We would also be happy to offer advice on planning a control programme in your area for Knotweed or other problem species.

## People and Nature

'People and Nature' is the theme of the Galway County Biodiversity Project. The project is an action of the Galway County Heritage Plan, and is a joint initiative between Galway County Council and NUI Galway, with the support of Galway Rural Development, Galway County Heritage Forum and The Heritage Council.

This information is produced as part of Action 8 of the Galway County Biodiversity Action Plan.



the galway county  
**biodiversity**  
project

**INVASIVE SPECIES**  
**IN COUNTY GALWAY**



**JAPANESE KNOTWEED**

*Fallopia japonica* or Japanese Knotweed is known as one of the 100 worst invasive species in the world. It is spreading rapidly all over Ireland and is now causing problems in many parts of County Galway.

Please help us fight this menace plant.

## How to recognise it

The most striking characteristic is the stems of the plant, which are purple or green, and resemble bamboo canes. The leaves are broad and grow in zig-zags along the branches. It produces long strings of creamy-white flowers late in the summer. Roots are bright orange when cut open. In winter the plant dies back leaving distinctive brown stems.



*Leaves and flowers in late summer*

## How does it spread?

Although Japanese Knotweed produces flowers, the plants in Ireland are infertile, and cannot produce seed.

Instead, the plant spreads by growth of its roots and by fragmentation. The roots can grow up to 7m away from the parent plant. In addition, any cut or broken fragments of the root or stem will sprout to form new plants. The plant is most commonly spread by the movement of soil from infected areas, or by the mowing or flailing of plants in lawns or hedgerows.

## Manual Control

This is not generally recommended for Japanese Knotweed, as cutting or disposing of the plant may cause it to spread further. If herbicide is not an option, it is recommended that the mature roots and stems are pulled out regularly over several years. Do not flail cut. All pulled remains should be burned to prevent regrowth.

## Chemical Control

Herbicides provide the best and most cost effective method for Knotweed control, and the recommended treatment is a Glyphosate formula such as 'Round-Up Bi-Active'. Using the recommended concentration, leaves should be sprayed until well coated but not dripping.

Please take care when using herbicides, and carefully consider your impacts on nearby land or waterways. Read the label carefully, and always use appropriate safety equipment.

## Timing

In Ireland, herbicide is most effective when applied in mid to late summer, when the plant is at its most vigorous. It should take about 3-4 years of annual treatments to clear the worst of the infestation, after which you should perform annual checks to control any new seedlings growth.

## Where did it come from?

Japanese Knotweed is native to Japan, where it grows on poor soils on mountain slopes and volcanoes.

It was first introduced in the late 19th century for ornamental use and as a forage crop for grazing animals. However, it escaped into the wild, and can now be found growing in a range of habitats around Ireland.



*A dense stand of knotweed in winter*

## Why is it a problem?

Knotweed grows very vigorously and quickly forms dense thickets that can take over gardens, and wildlife habitats. It can rapidly spread along roadsides, riverbanks, railway lines and derelict sites. When the plant dies back in winter it leaves bare ground which is more susceptible to erosion. In urban environments, some seedlings have even been known to grow through concrete!

It is estimated that a clear-up of Japanese Knotweed in the UK alone would cost £2bn