It’s Tall!  
It’s Tough!  
It’s Green!  
It’s NOT 
The Incredible Hulk©!

Knotweed Timeline

1777  
First registration of Japanese Knotweed (JK) as Reynoutria japonica by Dutchman named Houttuyn

c.1823  
Philippe von Siebold brings JK to his nursery in Holland

1850  
von Siebold sends JK to Royal Botanical Gardens in Kew, England

JK spreads throughout the U.K. as gardeners clamber for this prize-winning “exotic ornamental”

c.1890  
U.S. gardeners catch the craze and JK appears in landscape plans and along stream banks across the East Coast

Today -JK is flourishing in almost every state, including Alaska

Resources

~ The Knotweed Manual by Dr. Lois Child
www.lboro.ac.uk/research/cens/invasives/knotweed_manual.htm

~ Black River Action Team, Springfield, VT
www.blackriveractionteam.org
802-885-1533

~ Army Corps of Engineers
www.nae.usace.army.mil

~ Steve “Wildman” Brill, knotweed recipes
www.wildmanstevebrill.com

~ VT Association of Conservation Districts
www.vacd.org

~ The Nature Conservancy
www.nature.org

~ Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, Ascutney, VT
www.swcrpc.org
802-674-9201

~ Jennifer Forman-Orth’s JK site
www.knottybits.com

To learn about herbicidal options for knotweed management, contact the Nature Conservancy at (703) 841-5300

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A Knotty Issue

Originally from the slopes of Asian volcanoes, Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica* or *Polygonum cuspidatum*) has no natural enemies in the US or Europe. The asparagus-like young shoots emerge in early spring on river banks, in empty lots, construction sites and backyards, growing many feet tall throughout the summer. Although the hollow, jointed stalks look like bamboo, the resemblance ends there. Heart-shaped leathery leaves unfurl on zig-zag branches. The rhizome or root-ball lies just under the soil surface, but the main root can penetrate up to nine feet, a real challenge to remove.

Knotweed is found in almost every type of soil, has been seen pushing through pavement, brick walls, bridge foundations and buildings. When the plant is disturbed above-ground, a hormone in the root stimulates the growth of new shoots — up to 60’ away from the “mother” plant! A new colony of knotweed can establish from a chunk of root or stem the size of your fingernail.

Spring — thick, reddish stalks push up early, resembling asparagus stalks.

Summer — stalks grow quickly, leaves unfurl in zig-zag pattern, plant spread by root system.

Autumn — sprays of white (or reddish-pink) flowers attract bees and other insects.

Winter — dead stalks can remain for two years.

Japanese Knotweed is also commonly known as: Mexican bamboo, fleece-flower, wild rhubarb, Sally rhubarb, donkey rhubarb, crimson beauty, and gypsy rhubarb.

~ has few natural enemies outside Japan;
~ dense leaf-canopy shades out other plants;
~ spreads very quickly;
~ does not shade streams or rivers (cooler water is better for fish!);
~ thrives where soil is disturbed, such as eroded stream banks, possibly compounding erosion problems

DO cut knotweed regularly with a sharp blade, every time stalks reach 8 – 10”.
DO remove cuttings — place in tough black plastic bags in the sun to “melt,” or lay cut stalks out to dry on pavement, away from wind.
DO plant hardy traditional species in place of knotweed; check the resource section in this brochure for plants that can thrive on your site and further weaken knotweed.
DO make this task FUN! Invite your kids or friends to help, try making paper from the leathery leaves or sample a recipe made from the tender young shoots!
DON’T try to mulch, bury or compost — you will likely end up with more knotweed!
DON’T place knotweed-infested fill or soil any place that is currently knotweed-free.
DON’T fall into a War On Weeds mind-set; your goal is to weaken and out-compete the knotweed over time.
DON’T give up! Be positive, persistent and patient — there is help available.

(source: www.flickr.com/photos/roger/135292254/)
(source: flickr.com/photos/diandderek/468897765/)
(source: www.iowalivingroadway.com/InvasivePlants.asp)
(source: www.flickr.com/photos/pomphorhynchus/300967374/)
(source: www.flickr.com/photos/jayros/885860657/)