Knotweed
Invasive Species Alert

TOWN OF QUALICUM BEACH
Incorporated 1942

The spread of non-native plants has serious ecological, economic and social/health impacts. The Town of Qualicum Beach appreciates the cooperation of all residents to address Knotweed on private property. Local professionals can assist with the special treatment required for these species.

Why is knotweed a problem?

- One of the world's worst invasive species and a top-ten invasive species for eradication in BC.
- Dense stands eliminate all other vegetation and are extremely difficult to eradicate.
- Ecological impacts include damage to fish and wildlife habitat, reduced biodiversity, bank erosion and clogged waterways.
- Economic/Infrastructure impacts include penetration of hard surfaces such as pavement, damaging roads, foundations, other structures and drainage systems.
- Extremely vigorous rhizomes; new outbreaks can occur from small fragments of rhizome or stems.

Knotweed species

- **Japanese** (*Fallopia japonica*)
- **Bohemian** (*F. x Bohemicum*)
- **Giant Knotweed** (*F. Sachalinense*)
- **Himalayan** (*Polygonum polystachum*)

Himalayan Knotweed

What does it look like?

- Sometimes called ornamental bamboo; reddish/purple specked hollow stems, 1.5 to 6m tall. Of the 4 species, Himalayan is the smallest and Giant Knotweed the tallest.
- Leaves that are egg to heart-shaped with pointed tip (except Himalayan which is lance-shaped), alternate, stalked; approx.8-10 cm wide/15 cm long (except Giant Knotweed which is twice the size).
- Flowers (August-September) small white/green clusters.

Distribution

- Native to eastern Asia.
- Outbreaks in many regions in BC.

Could be confused with

- Elderberry (*Sambucus* spp.) with lance-shaped, toothed leaves.
- Bamboo species.

Flowering Knotweed

Species comparisons

Flowering Knotweed

Spread the *Word* Not the *Weed*

Reporting & assistance in the Town of Qualicum Beach: Call 1-250-857-2472
Provincial Report-a-Weed: www.reportaweedbc.ca
Local on-line reporting: www.coastalisc.com

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Stand of Giant Knotweed

Proper Disposal

It's best to have a professional remove this plant for you. However if you remove knotweed yourself, place in garbage bag and alert the Nanaimo landfill attendees and they will ensure proper disposal.

DO NOT COMPOST KNOTWEED!
Home composting is likely to spread the problem.

Knotweed stem

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 primarily by rhizome and some seed production (especially Bohemian); reproduces also from stems fragments and buds in root crowns.
- Overwintering rhizomes spread rapidly, extending 15-20m laterally, to a depth of 3m; can remain dormant up to 20 years.
- Dispersal: primarily by rhizome and fragments of stem, through human activities and by water.

What should you do?

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

- **Spread the word, not the weed:** don't purchase, grow or trade knotweed.
- **Contact:** There is a special treatment program for this species in the Town of Qualicum Beach. Please contact the Coastal Invasive Species Committee (below) for assistance with treating and disposing of this species.
- **Avoid:** digging and cutting this species as this can cause further spread.
- **Wash:** plant parts and seeds from vehicles, equipment and personal gear before leaving infested sites.
- **Dispose:** of any knotweed parts and contaminated soils in the proper manner (see above).
- **Monitor:** knotweed sites to avoid spread and for ongoing treatment until eradicated.
- **Soil and gravel:** use soil and gravel that are not contaminated and follow safe procedures to treat or dispose of contaminated soils and gravel.
- **Pesticides:** depending on what jurisdiction you are in, a pesticide permit may be required for treatment.

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