



Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*)

Japanese Knotweed may be one of the most ubiquitous of the invasive species in the U.S. and in VT. Easily recognized on the highway, it serves well as a landscape screen, as it was first intended.

Although bees gather around its flowers, other native insects do not. And as the Knotweed replaces native plants, native insect populations decrease because they do not have a food source. This then affects birds, fish and mammals that feed on the insects.

Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) was first introduced to the United States in the late 1800s as an ornamental garden and landscape screening plant. It since has spread dramatically and can be found in most communities in wet areas, along roadways and other disturbed areas.

DISPERSAL & REPRODUCTION

Primary means of reproduction is through vegetative regeneration. The rhizome root system spreads quickly, growing up to 7 feet long. The plant easily resprouts from fragments of root and stem, presenting a challenge to control efforts. Plant fragments may be dispersed in water (flooding conditions), on equipment (after roadside cutting) and in fill. Sexual reproduction is less prevalent but is being researched.



IDENTIFICATION: Japanese Knotweed is a perennial shrub that can grow to 10 feet tall and create a dense blanket along a stream bank, lakeshore or roadside. In the spring when it first emerges, it, has red stalks, with small green leaves. By mid summer it is lush green, with large heart shaped leaves (6in long), growing in an alternate pattern along long boughs. It blooms in August with white wispy trailings of flowers and is most easily recognized at this time. It can tolerate shade but thrives in sunny conditions and so is found in many habitats.

CONTROL : For very small infestations, digging up and removing ALL of the plant and root system may be effective. All the plant material should be placed in a black plastic bag and left to completely decay before taking to a landfill. The site should be monitored for at least 3 years. For well established plants eradication is very difficult. A combination of cutting and strategic use of an herbicide has been shown most effective. Repeated cutting of stalks through the season will deplete the energy of the plant. Herbicide may be painted on stems. This method will require a multiyear commitment to ensure eradication.

