

Wanted! Japanese, giant and Indian/Himalayan knotweed

Fallopia japonica, F. sachalinensis and Persicaria wallichii

Identification

- Stems slender, hollow, zig-zag from leaf node to leaf node, up to 4 m high
- Leaves heart to lancet-shaped, alternating, up to 40 cm long
- Stems die in autumn and re-grow in spring from woody rhizomes
- Flowers small, white or pink, clustered along short branches
- Japanese knotweed produces small (2.5–3 mm long) angled glossy brown seeds in New Zealand.
- Giant knotweed is also sometimes known as elephant ear as it is the tallest (up to 4 m high) and has the biggest leaves.
- Indian/Himalayan knotweed looks similar but grows only up to 1.8 m high, usually has green, non-hollow stems and smaller leaves.



Giant knotweed zig-zag stems and leaves.

Photo: M. von Tippelskirch

Where is it found?

Along rivers, stream margins, roadsides, in waste places and in gardens.

Why is it a problem?

Japanese, giant and Indian/Himalayan knotweed have the potential to become serious weeds and eradication in New Zealand is desirable. They are perennial herbs forming thickets of tall shoots excluding all other plants. They propagate from rhizomes (underground shoots) and Japanese knotweed also from seeds. Dislodged rhizome fragments can be spread by floods and drain-cleaning machinery and may rapidly colonise new areas. These plants are usually associated with wet river margins but can also cope with dry conditions. They have the potential to narrow waterway channels, impede water flow leading to siltation, and impact on recreational values of waterways.



Japanese knotweed hollow stems.

Photo: M. von Tippelskirch

Similar species

Young western balsam poplar shoots (*Populus trichocarpa*) look similar to the untrained eye but lack the hollow zig-zag stem.

Weed alert! Have you seen it?

So far only five populations are known in Canterbury. If you think you have found Japanese, giant or Indian/Himalayan knotweed, please contact Environment Canterbury.

Calling from Christchurch: (03) 353 9007

Calling from any other area: 0800 324 636
(0800 EC INFO)



Japanese knotweed stem base and new shoot.

Photo: M. von Tippelskirch

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information on Weed of the Month.

