

### Why is Japanese knotweed a problem?

- Stems and rhizomes can grow through concrete, drains, roads and pavements causing structural damage.
- Stems can pop up at least 7m from the parent plant, and can reach a depth of 3m or more.
- A piece of rhizome the size of a little finger nail can grow into a new plant.
- New stems grow from the knobby crown, located at the base of the stem.
- The stems die back in winter and take up to three years to decompose.
- If knotweed is not tackled when the plant is small, it can be an expensive business. Getting rid of it from 10 acres of the London Olympics site reportedly cost more than £70 million.
- It may be difficult to sell a house which has knotweed nearby, as some mortgage companies are reportedly withholding part of the mortgage until the knotweed is eradicated.
- Whilst it is not against the law to have knotweed on your land, you must not allow it to spread off site, otherwise you could be liable for any damage caused.
- In Scotland, the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 came into force in July 2012. This act states that it is an offence to spread intentionally or unintentionally Japanese knotweed (or other non-native invasive species).
- Argyll and Bute Council, Luss Estates and the MOD all have programmes in place to control knotweed.

### What should I do if I discover knotweed?

If you find knotweed on your property, you must not mow, strim or cut it. Even a small fragment of the stem, crown or rhizome can produce a new plant.

The only safe way is to treat it with a glyphosate-based weed killer specially formulated for the treatment of deep rooted weeds. This can be purchased.

The recommendation is to spray both sides of the leaves if possible. The plant will start to die when the herbicide reaches the rhizome or underground stem, which may take a couple of weeks. If a red shoot re-emerges, spray it again. The weed will finally give up!

The good news is, that if you catch it when it is young, you can treat it fairly easily, but you should watch the spot where it was growing for several years, to be sure that it does not re-establish itself.

In an area where knotweed is established, you will often see dead canes which have broken off the parent plant. If these have any of the rhizome attached, they can re-root and form a new clumps. The stems, being hollow, are light and can be blown by the wind, or float down the loch.

This is one of the main ways that the weed is spread. The other is that small fragments of the plant catch in shoes and in the paws of animals and end up on fertile soil

### What should I do if I discover knotweed elsewhere in Rhu and Shandon?

You can do your bit, now you are an expert, by reporting any outbreaks in our area to Rhu and Shandon Community Council (see front page), and we will report them to the appropriate person.



You are very unlikely to have Japanese Knotweed growing in your garden, but there are outbreaks locally on the shore and in the woods. Many of the images in this leaflet were taken on the Gare Loch shore.

This leaflet will

- help you identify the weed
- give you advice on what you should and should not do on discovering it
- suggest ways of eradicating it, in the unlikely event it is on your land

If, after reading this leaflet you are still not sure about a plant, your Community Council has a team of “experts”, who can come and advise you.

You can contact us in one of the following ways

- Use the feedback page of the our website,
- Send an email to [secretary@rhuandshandoncommunity.org](mailto:secretary@rhuandshandoncommunity.org).

You can also find more information about knotweed on our website

**This leaflet has been produced by Rhu and Shandon Community Council as a service to its residents.**

## Knotweed Lifecycle

You may know something about Japanese Knotweed from the press.

It was introduced as a garden plant in the 1820s. In this country it has become invasive and quickly spreads to swamp native plants. It can regenerate from a very small section of the stem or rhizome, and can pop up almost anywhere.



The first thing you will see is a small red or purple stem with a reddish purple leaf. These are easy to miss. As it grows the leaves will turn green but the stem usually remains red.

At this stage, the plant may only have a single stem.

Note the way the leaves are arranged alternately on the stem. This is definitive.



The hollow stems are jointed at the points where the leaves grow.

As the plant grows, the stems become less red.



The shovel shaped leaves are definitive. Note the flattish base and how they are arranged alternately on the stem, which is usually red or later on, speckled red.

The flowers will grow from the points where the leaves join the stem.

There are several other garden plants with red stems and similar shaped leaves.



This is Houttuynia, which has red stems and alternately placed leaves but it is a much smaller plant and the leaves do not have a flat base.



In early summer knotweed fills out and is green and bushy, but the stems remain reddish.

Now it is growing very fast; some say, up to 20cm per day.



After treatment with glyphosate, the regrowth is often stunted and the leaves are yellowish. Further treatment is necessary to ensure eradication.

If you have treated the weed with glyphosate, you will not see the following images. They will, however, help you to recognise knotweed if it is growing elsewhere.

In late summer creamy tassels of flowers grow out from the nodes.

At this point the hollow stems can be 2-3m tall



In late Autumn and winter, brown, jointed, hollow bamboo-like stems are still standing or are lying on the ground. At this stage the stems can be burned, provided they are not moved off site.



The crown and rhizome are brown on the outside and have orange coloured centres which are visible when the stems break off.

