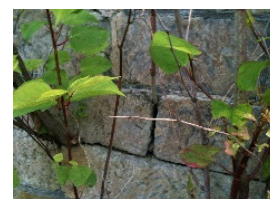


Japanese Knotweed

(*Reynoutria japonica*)



This Asian perennial shrub is a member of the dock family, Polygonaceae. Each spring, bamboo-like stalks emerge, growing rapidly to achieve a height of 2-3 metres when fully grown. The repeated formation of these stalks over the years results in a dense crown forming at the base and this can be used as a guide to estimate the maturity of the specimen. These clumps or crowns are known as 'stands', from these main stalks/canes arching stems grow which produce alternating heart-shaped leaves.

In autumn the plant flowers comprising small fronds of creamy white flowers that hang down from the leaf axils. Generally, seeds are not produced by the flowers of the japonica species. Seeds are sometimes produced by the other varieties; Giant Knotweed and Bohemica however, it is widely accepted that any seeds which are produced are generally not viable.

Once flowering is complete, the plant enters senescence where it dies back for the winter. Stems often dry out resulting in brown bamboo-like canes that may stay erect for several years before decaying.

This species is known for developing extensive rhizome (root) networks which are notoriously resilient to herbicide use. As noted above Japanese knotweed does not spread by seed in the UK, it spreads by movement/relocation of viable root and plant fragments; this is known as being vegetative.

Typical growth phases of species

| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-----|-----|------------|-----|----------------|-----|-----|---------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| Dead Canes | | | New Growth | | Growth Matures | | | Flowers | | Vegetation Dies Back | |

Main Problems

This legislated non-native species currently can reduce property valuations, delay sales and cause a lack of confidence with purchasers.

This species typically demonstrates a rapid rate of spread within suitable environments, often building sites when soils are disturbed. Soils containing fragments of viable rhizomes and plant material are classified as controlled waste under the current Waste Management Regulations Act 1994.

The dense coverage damages the environment by reducing biodiversity (flora and fauna) by shading out.

Japanese Knotweed Images



Similar Species

