



Please visit our **website** for more information at:

[www.catskillstreams.org](http://www.catskillstreams.org)

Reference our **fact sheet** on our website for more information on how to get rid of the Japanese knotweed on your property!



Leaf of Japanese Knotweed Plant

Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension  
Ulster County



Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County  
10 Westbrook Lane  
Kingston, NY 12401

Paid  
Postage  
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# Japanese Knotweed

Without *prompt* and *vigorous* action, knotweed will take over entire riverbanks, displace native habitat, and damage the scenic and recreational quality of Catskill Streams!!!



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## What is knotweed?

Japanese knotweed is a perennial plant native to Asia, but that was brought to the United States as an ornamental

Common Names include: Japanese Bamboo, Elephant Ear, and Fleecflower

It thrives in moist soil or river cobbles, full or partial sunlight. Most common in the flood plains along creeks and rivers, also along roadsides and in ditches

Scientific names: *Fallopia japonica* & *Polygonum cuspidatum*

## What does it look like?



Dense stands can reach up to 12 feet tall

Bamboo-like, green or reddish stems

Bright green leaves, 1-10 inches wide with smooth edges (said to be in the shape of an elephant ear)

Starts growth in April, at full height by July

Spikes of small white flowers in late summer

Dormant in the winter, but dead, brown stems remain standing

## Why is knotweed a problem?



Knotweed is an extremely fast growing and aggressive plant. It invades rivers, creeks, and stream banks, replacing the native vegetation, and alters critical fish and wildlife habitat. It also reduces access to recreational sites access points on streams, rivers, and creeks

Due to the long and massively intricate root system, large patches are very difficult to eradicate

## How does it spread?



New Plants can grow from a 1/2 inch piece of so proper disposal is critical. This means that one plant if cut up or broken off can create many more plants. However, knotweed can be spread through many other means:

- Being carried by flooding
- Contaminated fill
- Contaminated yard waste
- Improper Disposal
- Seed Dispersal



## How can it be controlled?



Several treatment options are available in controlling knotweed:

**Pulling**— which involves digging up the plant and root ball, trying to get as much of the root as possible when pulling up the plant. This method usually requires persistent attention to receive success

**Cutting**— usually is done close very close to the base of the knotweed, so as to leave just the roots in the ground. This method usually also requires consistent attention to receive success to the effected area

**Covering**— This method is combined with the cutting method and usually once the area has been cleared from cutting is then covered with thick fabric or plastic to block the sun

**Using Herbicides**— These are either sprayed or injected into the plant to kill it. These methods, also may need to be done more then once for effectiveness

All of these methods when used require proper disposal of the knotweed, including bagging the knotweed and taking it to a waste facility, or placing it on drying racks located above the ground, and then (with the correct permits) burning the knotweed to prevent it from spreading. To find out more please check out our **fact sheet** located on our website.

