

# Japanese knotweed

## A persistent invader!

Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), which is of Asian origin, is considered to be one of the most invasive species in the world.

It's been in Quebec for several decades now, transforming landscapes, threatening local biodiversity and causing landowners to incur significant expenses.

### How to recognize it

#### Stem

- Similar to bamboo
- From 1 to 4 m high
- Purple to green
- Hollow
- Its base can be up to 4 cm in diameter
- Sturdy



▲ Stem © Comité ZIP des Seigneuries  
▶ Flowers © Maja Dumat - CC BY 2.0

#### Flowers

- Clusters of white flowers appear in August and September



#### Leaves

- Alternate
- Oval to triangular with a pointed tip and flat base
- From 10 to 23 cm in length



▲ Leaves © Michael Gasperl - CC BY-SA 3.0  
▶ Roots © Denys Lortie

Be careful, Japanese knotweed can be confused with giant knotweed and/or Bohemian knotweed.

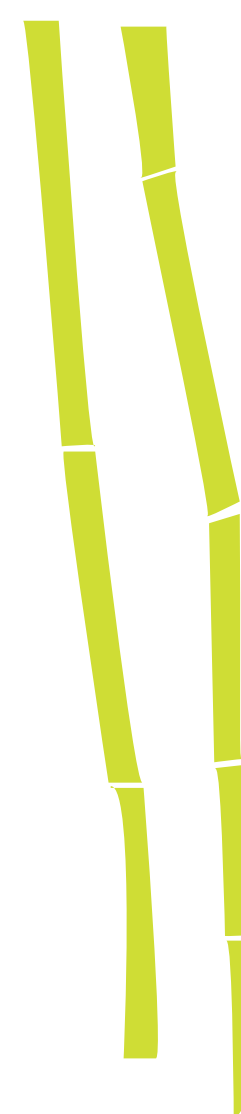
#### Roots and rhizomes

- Orange
- The plant's energy reserve
- Up to 2 m deep and occasionally more, while the root system can extend up to 20 m in periphery
- Can survive up to 10 years in the ground



Japanese knotweed does not pose any risk to human health.

### Problems



Due to its early and rapid growth, as well as its roots, which release compounds that are detrimental to other plants' development, Japanese knotweed can dominate vast areas. As a result, it **reduces local plant biodiversity**.

In addition to producing fertile seeds, it can propagate from rhizome or stem fragments, and thus spread quickly over great distances. Its young stems are able to grow up through cracks in asphalt or concrete and **cause infrastructure damage**.

### Control project

In the summer of 2017, four waterfront sites, in the Montreal Metropolitan Community, were selected to put into practice Japanese knotweed **control methods**.

Beside of Contrecoeur's town hall, we used mechanical excavation and installed a geomembrane.

Method used:

- ① Cutting of all stems
- ② Excavation of the root system using an excavator
- ③ Installation of a geomembrane for a minimum of eight years
- ④ Planting of indigenous species around the site to create a plant barrier
- ⑤ Removal of any new growth, every two weeks, between May and October

There are other methods to control Japanese knotweed. For more information, please visit the Comité ZIP des Seigneuries website.



▲ Initial colony © Comité ZIP des Seigneuries



▲ Excavator in action © Denys Lortie



▲ Installed geomembrane © Comité ZIP des Seigneuries

### Preventive measures

- Identify the plants and pinpoint their location.
- **Report** the presence of Japanese knotweed to the municipality.
- **Act as quickly as possible** to prevent its spread.
- Collect all plant residues, put them in resistant plastic bags for waste collection. **DO NOT COMPOST** or scatter in water.
- **Thoroughly clean** tools before and after using them, to avoid spreading the plant. Make sure that there is no residue under shoes, car tires or on work gloves.
- Do not sell, purchase or trade Japanese knotweed plants.



▲ Cut © Comité ZIP Jacques-Cartier

### Indigenous species

It is possible to prevent the growth of Japanese knotweed by planting **indigenous species**, especially shrubs that create shady environments, which are unfavourable for its growth. Here are some examples:

- Speckled alder (*Alnus incana subsp. rugosa*)
- Red osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*)
- American black elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)
- Staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*)
- Interior willow (*Salix interior*)



▲ Red osier dogwood © Superior National Forest  
▼ Interior willow © Pépinière Boucher  
▶ Staghorn sumac © Herman, D.E, USDA



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