



Japanese Knotweed *Polygonum cuspidatum* Sieb. & Zucc

Common Names: Japanese knotweed, Mexican bamboo

Native Origin: Eastern Asia

Description: Japanese knotweed, a member of the buckwheat family (*Polygonaceae*), is an upright, shrub like, herbaceous perennial that can grow to over 10 feet in height. As with all members of this family, the base of the stem above each joint is surrounded by a membranous sheath. Stems are smooth, stout and swollen at joints where the leaf meets the stem. Although leaf size may vary, they are normally about 6 inches long by 3 to 4 inches wide, broadly oval to somewhat triangular and pointed at the tip. The minute greenish-white flowers occur in attractive, branched sprays in summer and are followed soon after by small winged fruits. Seeds are triangular, shiny, and about 1/10 inch long. It reproduces primarily by seed and by vegetative means with the help of long, stout rhizomes. It can be transported to new sites by water, wind, as a contaminant in fill-dirt, or on the soles of shoes.



Habitat: It can tolerate a variety of adverse conditions including full shade, high temperatures, high salinity, and drought. It is found near water sources, such as along streams and rivers, in low-lying areas, waste places, utility rights-of-way, and around old home sites. It can quickly become an invasive pest in natural areas after escaping from cultivated gardens.

Distribution: This species is reported from states shaded on Plants Database map. It is reported invasive in AK, CT, DC, DE, GA, IN, MA, MD, ME, MI, MO, NC, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OR, PA, RI, TN, VA, VT, WA, WI, and WV.

Ecological Impacts: It spreads quickly to form dense thickets that exclude native vegetation and greatly alter natural ecosystems. It poses a significant threat to riparian areas, where it can survive severe floods and is able to rapidly colonize scoured shores and islands. Once established, populations are extremely persistent.



Control and Management: It is difficult to control because of its ability to re-grow from vegetative pieces and from seed.

- **Manual-** Hand pull young plants; remove all roots and runners to prevent re-sprouting
- **Chemical-** It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate or triclopyr. Apply herbicides to freshly cut stems or to foliage. Follow label and state requirements.

References: www.forestimages.org, <http://plants.usda.gov>, www.nps.gov/plants/alien, Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Areas, NPS, p. 20-21