



Japanese knotweed Information for Planners, surveyors & developers

Available leaflets

- Identification
- Legal issues
- **Planning, surveying & development**
- Utility & engineering providers
- Route maintenance & vehicle recovery
- Mortgage Lenders

Causing the spread of Japanese knotweed may make you liable to prosecution

Whether you are involved with planning, carrying out site surveys or are a prospective landowner/developer it is essential that you are aware of the risks posed by Japanese knotweed.



Why is it your problem?

Japanese knotweed can restrict site access and cause structural damage to buildings and hard surfaces. If growing alongside watercourses it can increase the risk of bank erosion and cause flooding hazards. Failure to contain and treat Japanese knotweed could exacerbate and compromise future site operations with increased economic consequences.



How does it spread?

Japanese knotweed is a highly invasive, vigorous plant, forming dense stands up to 3 metres in height. In Europe, it spreads by vegetative reproduction, meaning that new plants can regenerate from small fragments of plant material. Operations that cause disturbance e.g. surveying, drilling, bore holing, importation of topsoil for landscaping, linear trenching, construction of transport routes and building development can therefore accelerate its spread.

Flowers Japanese knotweed can produce seeds, but spread by this means is unlikely as they rarely germinate in the wild.

Stem New plants can grow from pieces of green stem in soil or water. Machinery such as strimmers or flails will spread knotweed.

Crown This part of the plant, where the stem meets the roots and new shoots develop, is capable of surviving drying and composting and can rapidly produce new canes when it comes into contact with soil.

Rhizome Fragments smaller than a fingernail, from these underground shoots, can produce new plants if disturbed.

What can you do?

Avoid spread by adopting a few basic rules and educating workers to check for it on site and in any imported materials such as top soil.

Make sure you can spot it! Ensure key site workers are able to identify Japanese knotweed and its changing appearance through the seasons. Equally important is the ability to identify knotweed rhizome (underground shoots). Use the identification leaflet and display our identification posters in prominent positions on site to inform workers. There is also a sticker for display in vehicle cabs as an extra reminder.

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PREVENT THE SPREAD OF KNOTWEED

www.cornwallknotweed.org.uk

Asking the question 'is knotweed present and who's involved?'

If you are a planner, surveyor or developer, asking the question if knotweed is present at the onset will save money.

General Rule If knotweed is within 10 metres of the proposed operation, you will need to take appropriate action.

Planning

At the initial stages of planning, it is necessary to identify if the area is affected by knotweed. Check historical databases that may exist e.g. biological records office for knotweed observations in the area and perform a site survey. Suitable recommendations and management conditions can be attached to the planning application and an appropriate course of action implemented. Underground material doesn't respect boundaries and can extend far more widely than the visible vegetation. To prevent re-establishment, the co-operation of landowners may be necessary, to adopt a co-ordinated treatment programme, .

Surveying

Site investigation Always check for knotweed before performing any disturbance activities.

Gaining access If it is necessary to remove above-ground material to gain access, keep it to a minimum. If working on a site for extended periods, consider fencing off the remaining knotweed to prevent additional disturbance. Display a notice to inform other workers/agencies why it is fenced off. Cut the stems, do **NOT** use flails or strimmers. Do **NOT** pull them, as this may dislodge crown material. The cut stems should be left *in situ* to dry out, either returned back to the stand or placed on a suitable membrane surface (not soil or grass) to prevent re-establishment. Do not allow them to blow away or be dislodged by traffic. Ensure the cut material cannot enter a watercourse, drain or ditch. When the stems have dried to a dark brown colour they are dead and can be burned. This is **NOT** the case with crown or rhizome material.

Use of machinery Refrain from using vehicles and machinery that are likely to trap plant material, particularly those with caterpillar tracks. Where it is necessary to use tracked machinery in an infested area, use a barrier textile and an appropriate surface as a base for vehicles to prevent spread. Clean and inspect all vehicles and machinery to avoid cross contamination. Do this on a hard surface or plastic sheet using a dry stiff brush. Avoid washing, unless there is a containment facility. Pay particular attention to tyres, wheel arches and drilling equipment ensuring that all dislodged material is recovered and returned back to the contaminated area.

Don't allow knotweed material to be spread around the site or enter a watercourse.

Development

Ensure that your site survey includes all the necessary checks for the presence of knotweed. Sometimes, if canes have blown down or have been cut, it can be difficult to spot knotweed during the winter months. A trained eye, however, can usually identify it from canes and a deep layer of the plant litter found on the ground. **Do not scrape a site until you are confident that there is no knotweed** as this operation will spread the plant across the whole of the site and vastly increase costs. If a site has already been scraped, check in the scraped waste for the presence of rhizome material. If knotweed is on site, seek advice on treatment options from a contractor. **The sooner you act, the more options are available and the cheaper it will be to manage.**

Landscaping Inspect all materials, whether from elsewhere on site or imported, to ensure they are free from knotweed material, in particular crown and rhizome fragments.

Disposal Treat knotweed *in situ* where possible. All waste containing Japanese knotweed is considered a 'controlled waste'. If removed off site, it must be disposed of at an appropriately registered landfill site and carried by a licensed haulier. Keep this to a minimum by taking action early and discussing your options with a contractor.

Help inform future control strategies

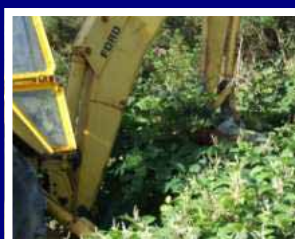
Cornwall Council operates a mapping database for knotweed in Cornwall. By recording your knotweed sightings you can help inform future control strategies. Visit the website and enter details of the location and the area covered by the knotweed stand.

www.cornwallknotweed.org.uk

Additional resources

More information is available at www.cornwallknotweed.org.uk

The Environment Agency's **Knotweed Code of Practice** provides guidance for managing Japanese knotweed on development sites. It includes information on waste disposal, identification and a management plan template. Available at www.environment-agency.gov.uk



We want to ensure that your needs are met. If you would like this information in any other format please contact:

The Corporate Equality & diversity team

Email: equality@cornwall.gov.uk



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