

JAPANESE KNOTWEED

(FALLOPIA JAPONICA)

2019 Status in Maine:

Widespread. Severely Invasive. Perennial herb, very tall (up to 10') growing in dense stands. Originates in eastern Asia.

Identify

Leaves: Alternate, entire, and flat at base, abruptly tapering to a pointed tip.

Flowers: Small and white. Occur in small spikes along the stems. Bloom in late July-August.

Fruit: Fruit is often sterile but have white "wings" for wind dispersal.

Stem: Round and hollow with swollen nodes where the leaves meet the stem. Similar in appearance to bamboo. Dead brown stalks may persist through winter.

Location

This plant is highly adaptable, tolerating dry to seasonally saturated soils. Found along rivers or other bodies of water, forest, and forest edges. Problematic along large rivers.

Parks of concern: Hinckley Park, Greenbelt, Yerxa Park, Trout Brook Nature Preserve, Legere Park, Pierce Street Park.

Problem

Japanese knotweed frequently forms dense thickets or monocultures that shade out almost all other plants. It spreads easily from even very small fragments and is very difficult to remove once established.

How it spreads: Spreads very easily from fragments of the stem or root. Often transported by flood waters.

Management

Small plants can be cut but this must be done repeatedly during the growing season for several years as the plant can re-sprout. Smothering with carpets, tarps, or other material has shown some success but must be monitored and left for several years. Extreme care should be taken to dry or burn all plant parts before disposal.

