

# Homeowner's Guide to Japanese Knotweed Control

Developed by the Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area 7/2007



Photo: Steve Garske

**Japanese knotweed** (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) is a non-native invasive species that threatens our community. This rapidly growing plant is quick to shade out native species and garden cultivars. It takes over roadsides, residences and community recreation areas, threatens our stream banks and increases fire danger. While the towering stems of the plant look menacing, the real issue is the underground rhizome that can grow lightning fast and invade new areas.

**Effective treatment requires a multi-pronged approach that will need more than one attack.**

**Cutting** the knotweed only removes the aboveground portion and only serves to stimulate the below ground rhizome. In some cases weekly mowing can eventually draw down enough of the plant's reserves to kill it.

The best approach to control is through a combination of **cutting** and **herbicide** application. A late spring/early summer treatment followed by an early fall re-treatment is needed. Several years of treatment may be needed for well-established populations. The plant will not resprout from the cut cane, but removing them may aid in finding and treating resprouts in an infested patch. The area will also be more conducive to revegetation if the cut canes are removed.

## **You will need:**

- Loppers
- Herbicide (glyphosate concentrate)
- Rubber gloves
- Long pants, long sleeves, sturdy shoes- not sandals
- Spray bottle
- Liquid Dye (food coloring or Rit dye works)

**Glyphosate concentrate-** Glyphosate is a non-restrictive use herbicide. Anyone can purchase and use it. This does not mean that this product is not without some risk if used improperly. As it is a pesticide, you are legally required to read and follow all instructions on the label. This herbicide should not be used in the water and residue or left over chemical should not be allowed to get into public waters including household drains. Used gloves can be disposed of in the trash. Contaminated clothing should be washed separately.

The herbicide is considered non-toxic to pets and humans, but as a precaution please keep them out of the area until the herbicide has soaked in. The key to effective herbicide use is the correct dosage or percent active ingredient. Too much and you will only harm part of the plant. Too little and it has limited effect.

Two options are:

**Cornerstone** (EPA 42750-60-1381) active ingredient glyphosate 41% (2.5 gallons, \$45- Ashland Ag Center on Sanborn Ave)

**Round up Concentrate Plus** (EPA 71995-29) active ingredient glyphosate 18% (16 oz, \$20- hardware stores)

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**Step 1:** Wearing appropriate safety gear, dilute the **Cornerstone** 1:1 with water in a spray bottle. **If you are using Round up Concentrate Plus, use it straight.** Add enough dye so you will be able to tell where you have treated. Label bottle. If diluting, do so over a dry sandy or gravel area. Any spills on grass or desirable plants will kill them.

**Step 2:** On a day where it will be free of rain for at least 1 hour after treatment, cut the stem of the plant 2-3 inches above the soil. Wearing rubber gloves, spray **immediately** with herbicide mixture. You will only need to spray the cut rim of the plant stem. The plant will want to seal itself up soon after injury, so there is a window of just a few minutes where the herbicide can be taken up. Overspray will harm surrounding vegetation, please use caution.



Photos: Carmen Chapin

**Step 3:** You must wait at least 7 days before re-cutting, mowing or disturbing treated stems. The herbicide needs time to move into the belowground structures for an effective kill.

**Step 4:** After the plant has regrown (early fall), you may use the cut and treat method again. Or you may use a 2% active ingredient solution of glyphosate to spray the leaves. If you choose to use a 2% solution follow the manufacturer's guidance for dilution or call for assistance. Use of a 2% solution, called a foliar spray, requires near complete coverage of the leaves to be effective. Using this method often results in overspray and damage to non-target plants. Please be careful.

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Special thanks to Travel Green Wisconsin, Apostle Islands Realty, Bayfield Regional Conservancy and area volunteers!