

CENTRAL JERSEY INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM

Invasive Plant Fact Sheet

Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)



Family name: Knotweed family (Polygonaceae)

Native range: Asia

General: Herbaceous perennial reaching 3 to over 10 feet in height. Stems hollow, jointed, green to reddish-green in color. The shoots grow from spreading rhizomes. Though killed by frost, stems can persist through winter.

Leaves: Alternate, toothless, broadly oval with pointed tips, from 3 to 6 inches long and 2 to 5 inches wide.

Flowers: Small, greenish-white, borne on branched stems emerging from upper leaf

axils. 3 to 6 inches long. Appearing from August to September.

Fruit: Black, smooth, shiny, 3-angled seeds contained in a papery, winged fruit. ripening in September. Knotweed spreads mostly via rhizomes of up to 65 feet in length. Small rhizome fragments can sprout new plants. Flooding, excavations, and roadwork spread this plant.

Look-alikes: Giant knotweed (*Polygonum sachalinense*) is also an invasive, non-native species that looks very similar to Japanese knotweed. Giant knotweed is *highly threatening* to natural plant communities. All detected occurrences should be eradicated.

Habitat: Streamside, open forest, forest edge, wet meadow, roadside, yard, garden

Threats to native habitats: Japanese knotweed's dense growth crowds out native plants and makes stream corridors inaccessible for wildlife and recreational use. It thrives in highly disturbed areas such as roadsides and riparian areas.



NJ Status: Japanese knotweed is widespread. It is *highly threatening* to natural plant communities. All newly detected occurrences should be eradicated.

Commercial Availability: Not found.

Sources: Forestry Images: Forest Health, Natural Resources & Silviculture Images: <http://www.forestryimages.org>
<http://nbii-nin.ciesin.columbia.edu/ipane/icat/browse.do?specied=86>



Central Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (CJISST) is a regional cooperative effort to detect, map, and manage emerging populations of invasive species. This initiative is a partnership of state, county, and municipal agencies, conservation groups, and private citizens. To learn more, please contact us: **Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space**, (609) 730-1560, www.fohvos.org or **Upper Raritan Watershed Association**, (908) 234-1852, www.urwa.org.

