



Himalayan Knotweed

(*Persicaria wallichii*)

HIGH RISK

Common Names

Himalayan Knotweed, *Persicaria wallichii*, (previously referred to as *Polygonum polystachyum*), Knotweed, Smartweed, Wallich's Knotweed, Walach Knotweed.

Family: Polygonaceae (Buckwheat family)

Status in Ireland

Himalayan Knotweed is highly invasive and listed under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, which makes it illegal to spread this species in Ireland. Its control is important for maintaining biodiversity and preventing damage to ecosystems.

Description / Profile

Himalayan Knotweed is a large herbaceous perennial plant. Native to the Himalayas, it has been introduced to Ireland, where it has become an invasive species, similar to its relative, Japanese Knotweed.

The plant primarily spreads through vegetative reproduction via its rhizome system, which can regenerate new plants from even small fragments of the root. Seeds can also contribute to its spread, but vegetative propagation is the dominant method.



Himalayan Knotweed competes aggressively with native plants for light, water, and nutrients, forming dense thickets that suppress biodiversity.

It can alter hydrological processes along riverbanks, leading to increased erosion and instability of riverbanks due to its extensive root system and ability to outcompete stabilising vegetation.

Size

This species typically grows to a height of 1.5 to 3 metres, depending on environmental conditions.

Leaves

The leaves are lanceolate (lance-shaped), long, and pointed, with a tapering tip. They are bright green and range from 10 to 25 cm in length, with a smooth margin and a slightly rough texture. The leaves are alternately arranged along the stem.



Himalayan Knotweed Leaf

Stems

The plant has tall, reddish-brown stems that are hollow and smooth, resembling bamboo but thinner and more delicate than those of Japanese Knotweed. These stems die back in winter and regrow in spring.



Himalayan Knotweed Stem

Flowers

Himalayan Knotweed produces delicate, white to pale pink flowers, which are borne in dense clusters (racemes) at the ends of stems and leaf axils from mid to late summer (July to October). The flowering period can extend into early autumn.



Himalayan Knotweed Flower

Rhizomes / Roots

It has a dense, spreading rhizome system that can grow horizontally and contributes to its invasiveness by producing new shoots.



Himalayan Knotweed Rhizome

N.B. This Species Identification Guide is intended to outline the key identification factors and treatment options only and should not be used as a definitive method for species ID. Legislation and its interpretation is constantly evolving. A variety of other IAPS may be encountered, which may require specific survey and mitigation. Please contact Japanese Knotweed Control Ltd (mail@jkc.ie) for the latest position & advice.

Habitat

Himalayan Knotweed thrives in a wide range of habitats, including riparian zones (riverbanks and streams), disturbed soils, roadsides, woodlands, and moist, well-drained sites. It is particularly problematic in areas where it outcompetes native flora due to its rapid growth and spreading rhizomes.

Control & Management

Effective management requires a well-planned herbicide treatment programme combined with mechanical and biosecurity measures, particularly in protected areas.

Note: *Herbicide use near watercourses requires special permission from the local council or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).*

Chemical Control

Herbicide treatment (such as our Green Matters™ foam treatment) - is the most effective method, particularly when applied in late summer/early autumn when the plant is storing energy in its rhizomes. If near watercourses, use only aquatic-approved herbicides to prevent contamination and consider stem injection technique for a more precise application. Maintain a buffer zone (at least 10 metres) and avoid herbicide run-off.

Note: *Herbicide treatment may not be suitable where an area infested with Himalayan knotweed is designated for development. Excavation may be required to clear the area before development can commence.*

Growth Stage - Use appropriate herbicide formulations depending on the growth stage, example, in early growth (spring), full height (summer), flowering (late summer), or dying back (autumn/winter).

Mechanical Control

Excavation - mechanical removal can be effective and can be conducted all year round but must be done carefully to ensure all rhizomes are removed. Excavated soil containing knotweed must be managed and disposed of at authorised landfill sites.

S.O.S.™ - JKC soil screening service is an option to reduce landfill costs. Screened soils can be re-used on site to minimising materials requiring disposal to a licensed facility.

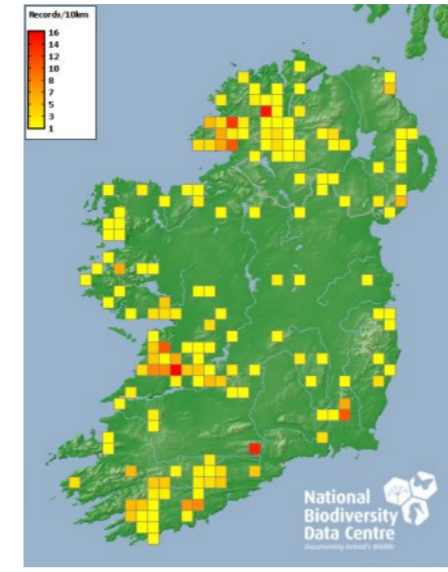
Deep Cell Burial - If there is space on the site, a burial cell can be considered. Vector material should be buried in a prepared cell that is lined with root barrier at a depth no less than 3m.

Treatment Bund - If there is space on the site, a treatment bund can be considered. Vector material should be placed in a prepared bund that is lined with root barrier and monitored/treated until new growth is completely suppressed.

Root Barriers - Barriers can be installed to prevent the spread of rhizomes into adjacent properties. Installing root barriers can help contain the spread of rhizomes, particularly near infrastructure or sensitive areas.

Herbicide Treatment Timetable

Month	Treatment	Herbicide Type	Herbicide Rate	Considerations
March - April	Early Growth Stage Foliar Application	Glyphosate-based herbicide (e.g., Roundup ProActive)	4-5 L/ha of 360g/L formulation	Apply when new shoots are actively growing and 20-50 cm tall. Ensure full coverage of leaves.
May - June	Mid-Growth Stage Foliar Application	Glyphosate or Triclopyr (e.g., Garlon 4)	Glyphosate: 5-6 L/ha; Triclopyr: 4-5 L/ha	Apply when plants reach 1-1.5m in height. Avoid application during flowering.
July - August	Cut & Spray Method	Glyphosate or Triclopyr	10-15 ml of 360g/L solution per cut stem	Cut stems to about 20 cm above ground and apply herbicide directly to the cut surface. Effective for dense patches.
September - October	Late Season Foliar Application	Glyphosate	5-6 L/ha	Apply to any regrowth before the onset of dormancy. Ensure thorough coverage of all foliage.
November - February	Physical Removal & Site Maintenance	N/A	N/A	Remove dead plants, roots, and any remaining debris. Monitor for regrowth and follow up as needed.



This map shows the current (2024) distribution of Himalayan Knotweed in Ireland, recorded by the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

Environmental Considerations

Herbicide Handling - Use PPE, including gloves, goggles, and long-sleeved clothing. Avoid skin and eye contact and inhalation. Follow all safety instructions on herbicide labels.

Herbicide Application Method - Use foliar spraying for large infestations and the stem injection method for smaller stands or in sensitive areas. Ensure accurate calibration of spraying equipment to avoid over-application.

Weather Conditions - Apply during calm, dry conditions to minimise drift. Avoid application during heavy rainfall or when rain is forecast within 6 hours to reduce run-off.

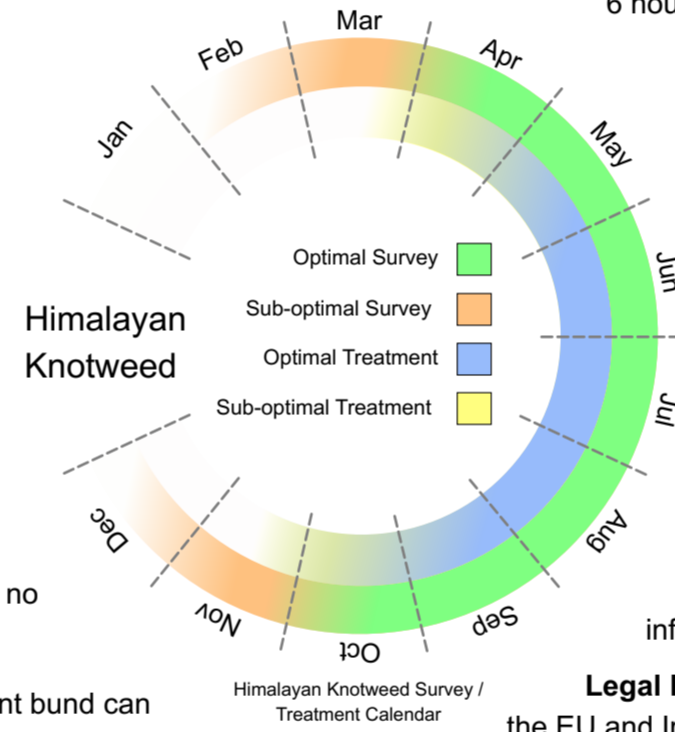
Storage & Disposal - Store herbicides securely in a dry, well-ventilated area away from water sources. Dispose of containers and unused herbicides according to local regulations to prevent environmental contamination.

Watercourses - Knotweed spreads easily along rivers and streams in Ireland, where water can carry rhizome fragments downstream.

Soil Movement - Soil movement or excavation might cause further spread, such as during construction projects.

Proximity to Infrastructure - Himalayan Knotweed has the potential impacts on riparian areas, roads, walls, and infrastructure.

Legal Requirements - Follow legal requirements under the EU and Irish regulations, ensuring compliance with all management and disposal practices. Under Irish law, it is illegal to cause or allow the spread of Himalayan Knotweed. Special care must be taken to manage and prevent its spread during construction and landscaping projects.



Reporting

Reporting sightings of invasive species in Ireland to the National Biodiversity Data Centre and/or the relevant local authority.

<https://records.biodiversityireland.ie/start-recording>.

Monitoring and Maintenance

Regular monitoring of the site is essential, particularly after initial treatment or excavation. Plan for follow-up inspections of treated / excavated areas for at least 3-5 years to check for regrowth or new infestations.

Safety Protocols

Herbicide Handling - Use PPE, including gloves, goggles, face mask and long-sleeved clothing, Coveralls. Avoid skin and eye contact and inhalation.



Follow all safety instructions on herbicide labels. If the infestation is in a public area, signage may be required to warn the public and prevent soil disturbance.

On-site Biosecurity Measures

Prevent Spread - Avoid disturbing the plant unnecessarily, as rhizome fragments can easily spread and establish new colonies. Remove and bag all cut material for proper disposal.

Equipment Cleanliness - Clean all tools, equipment, footwear, and clothing before leaving the site to prevent the spread of rhizomes and plant material.

Transport of Plant Material - Transport all plant material in sealed containers to an authorised disposal site.

Do not compost or leave on-site, as this can lead to further spread.

Monitoring & Follow-Up - Regular monitoring of the site is essential, particularly after initial treatment or excavation.

Plan for follow-up inspections of treated / excavated areas for at least 3-5 years to check for regrowth or new infestations.

Follow-up treatments may be necessary for several years due to the persistent nature of the rhizome system.

Long-Term Management

Site Rehabilitation - Following successful control, implement a long-term monitoring and rehabilitation plan to restore native vegetation and prevent reinvasion.

Re-vegetation - Replant treated areas with native species to restore ecological balance and prevent re-invasion by Himalayan Knotweed.

Community Engagement - Engage local communities in identification and reporting of knotweed infestations. Educate on its ecological impacts and promote the use of native alternatives for landscaping

For further information and free advice, please contact:
Japanese Knotweed Control Ltd.
 Email: mail@jkc.ie
 Tel: +353 (0)86 250 8805
 Web: www.jkc.ie

Knotweed Leaf Comparison

Species	Giant knotweed (<i>Fallopia sachalinensis</i>)	Bohemian knotweed (<i>Fallopia x bohemica</i>)	Japanese knotweed (<i>Fallopia japonica</i>)	Dwarf Japanese knotweed (<i>Fallopia japonica</i> var. <i>compacta</i>)	Himalayan knotweed (<i>Persicaria wallichii</i>)
Leaf					
Flower					
Stem					
Plant Size	4m to >5m tall	2m to >4m tall	1.5m to >3m tall	1m to <1.5m tall	2m to >3m tall
Leaf Size L/W	15cm to 40cm 2/3 as wide	12cm to 23cm 2/3 as wide	10cm to 17cm 2/3 as wide	5cm to 8cm 2/3 as wide	10cm to 20cm 1/2 as wide
Sex	Perfect and fertile, occasionally produces seed	Female or Perfect, occasionally produces seed	Female or Perfect (rare), occasionally produces seed	Female or Perfect (rare), occasionally produces seed	Perfect and fertile, usually produces seed
Flower Colour & Arrangement	Green-white to cream-white with compact, drooping arrangement	Green-white to cream-white with erect or loose, drooping arrangement	Green-white to cream-white with a loose, drooping arrangement	Pink-white with erect or loose, drooping arrangement	Pinkish-white to pink with a loose, spreading arrangement