



Information on Japanese Knotweed for

Surveyors, Planners and Developers

by Japanese Knotweed Specialists



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PART OF



**Grounds Care
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Contributing to the spread of Japanese knotweed can make you liable to prosecution

If you have involvement with planning, surveying, or are in the process of owning or developing a site, it is important that you know the risks caused by Japanese knotweed.

Why Japanese knotweed is your problem

Japanese knotweed may restrict access to your site, as well as potentially causing structural damage to buildings in the area. Additionally, it can promote flooding hazards and enhance the threat of bank erosion when flourishing alongside watercourses. If you fail to treat Japanese knotweed, it could undermine future operations on your site, resulting in harmful financial consequences.



How Japanese knotweed spreads

This highly invasive plant can reach 3 metres in height. Within Europe, vegetative reproduction results in its spread as new plants can form from small pieces of plant material. Operations which disturb the plant, such as drilling, importing topsoil, bore holing, constructing transport routes and developing buildings can therefore cause it to spread. Flowers - seeds can be produced by Japanese knotweed but these are unlikely to cause spread as they rarely blossom in the wild. Stem - fragments of green stem within water or soil can result in new plant growth. Machinery, including strimmers, help to spread knotweed. Crown - this section of the plant is where the stem and roots meet. New shoots grow here, and this part can potentially survive drying and composting, developing new canes when contacting soil. Rhizome - pieces (from underground shoots) which are smaller in size than a fingernail may develop new plants if they are disrupted.



How to avoid the spread

Employing basic rules and training workers on Japanese knotweed can prevent its spread. Ensure you can recognise it! Key site employees should be able to acknowledge Japanese knotweed and its fluctuating appearance during different seasons. It is also essential to be able to spot knotweed rhizome (underground shoots). You can place identification posters on site to assist in educating workers about knotweed.



Is Japanese knotweed present?

As a planner, surveyor or developer, posing the question 'is Japanese knotweed present?' at the start of the project will save you time and money in the long run. **General ruling** - if you identify the presence of knotweed within 10 metres of the proposed operation you will be required to take the correct course of action.



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The planning process

In the initial planning stages, you should acknowledge if the area is affected by Japanese knotweed. Examine any historical data that may exist. For example, a biological records office may hold information on knotweed in the area. Then, conduct a site survey. Appropriate suggestions and management recommendations can be attached to the application for planning. Underground plant material can extend further than visible foliage. To prevent regeneration, landowner co-operation may be required to utilise a collaborative treatment programme.



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The surveying process

Investigating a site - always look out for Japanese knotweed prior to conducting any disturbing activities.

Gaining access - if removing above-ground material is needed to gain access to the site, try to keep it to a minimum. If working on a site for extensive periods, contemplate placing a fence around the remaining knotweed to avoid any additional disturbance. Inform other employees with a notice as to why this area is closed off. Cut the stems of the knotweed but do NOT utilise strimmers or flails. Do NOT attempt to pull them as this could dislodge the crown material. Leave the cut stems to dry out, either placed back on the stand or on a membrane surface (not grass or soil) to prevent regeneration. Do not allow them to be displaced by traffic or blown away by gusts of wind. Make sure the cut material does not enter a watercourse, ditch or drain. Once the stems have dried to a dark brown hue, they are dormant and may be burned. This is NOT the case with rhizome or the crown of the knotweed.

Machinery use - Avoid using machinery or vehicles which could potentially trap plant material. If you need to use tracked machinery where knotweed is present, use a barrier textile and a suitable surface as a foundation for vehicles to avoid spreading. Examine and clean all machinery and vehicles to prevent cross contamination. Conduct this process on a plastic sheet or hard surface utilising a stiff brush. Do not wash them unless there is a containment area. Pay special attention to wheels and drilling equipment, making sure that any collected material is returned to the original place of contamination.

Do not allow Japanese knotweed material to enter a watercourse or spread around the site.



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The development process

Your site survey should include all the required inspections for the presence of Japanese knotweed. On some occasions, cut or blown over canes can make it challenging to identify knotweed in the winter months. However, an expert eye can normally recognise it from their canes and plant litter on the ground. **Do not begin scraping a site until you are adamant that there is no knotweed present** as this process will spread plant material around the whole site, resulting in extra economic costs. If the site has already been scraped, examine the waste to determine if rhizome material is present. If Japanese knotweed is present on site, get advice from a contractor regarding the treatment options available. **The quicker you act, the more treatment options are available for you to use, and the cheaper the cost is for management.**

Landscaping - examine all materials, whether they are imported or from other areas on site. Make sure they are free from knotweed, particularly rhizome and crown material.

Disposal - Waste which includes Japanese knotweed is considered a controlled waste. If you are removing it off site, you must dispose of it at a registered landfill site. Additionally, it must be carried by a licensed haulier. You can avoid this stage by taking action on knotweed early and by asking a contractor for treatment options.



Assist future control strategies

Assist in informing future control strategies by recording the presence of knotweed on your site.



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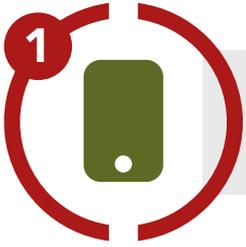
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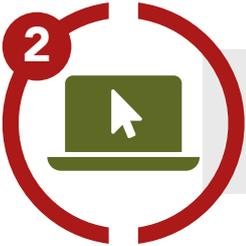


Contact us



Telephone

0800 122 3326



Email

knotweed@gcgrp.co.uk



Address

Unit 17a, Highway Farm, Horsley Road, Cobham, England KT11 3JZ



Visit

www.japaneseknotweedspecialists.com

