

Knotweed Complex
Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)
Giant Knotweed (*P. sachalinense*)
Himalayan Knotweed (*P. polystachyum*)

Currently in Montana, noxious weeds infest about 8.2 million acres. Many of these state listed noxious weeds were brought to America as ornamentals for gardens, medicinal purposes, by accident in discarded soil from a ship's ballast, or unintentionally in bags of seed brought from other parts of the world. Whatever the cause of introduction non-native plant species have found their way onto Montana's state listed noxious weed list.

Knotweed Complex (*Polygonum spp.*) is made up of three different species: Japanese, Giant and Himalayan. Japanese knotweed species are native to eastern Asia and were introduced into the United States during the 1800's as ornamentals, and were used for erosion control because of their extensive root system. Knotweeds grow in areas that are close to water; near streams, rivers, irrigation ditches and wetlands. It can also be found in other areas where soil has been disturbed such as roadsides, vacant lots, and around old homesteads. All of the species have very similar characteristics; leaves are alternate and heart-shaped. There is a thin, transparent covering at each node which can also be used for identification. Of the species, giant knotweed is the largest; the leaves of this plant can grow up to 1' long or longer and can be 2/3 as wide as they are long. Japanese knotweed leaves grow up to 6" in length and can be 3-4" in width, whereas Himalayan knotweeds' heart-shaped leaves grow to be 4-8" long and have soft hairs on the underside of the leaf and tips that are often elongated. The stem of this plant can grow up to 12' tall. Stems are smooth, hollow, and swollen where each leaf is attached. Knotweeds produce small green to white flowers from August-September that form clustered spikes at the ends of branches. Flowers make either pollen or seeds; pollen flowers are on separate plants than seed flowers. The flowers of Japanese knotweed are the largest of the three species and increase significantly in size with the age of the plant. Upon pollination, tiny black ribbed seeds are produced. This plant reproduces through seed and by its extensive rhizomatous root system, making it difficult to control. Knotweed plants are toxic to cattle, horses and goats if eaten.

Please take a few moments to learn about noxious weeds. If noxious weeds are not currently a problem in your area, they may be in the near future. For more information about Montana's state listed noxious weeds, regulated plants, or weed species listed on your county weed list, please contact your local county weed district (can list weed district name here... ex: Lewis & Clark County Weed District) at _(406)_(Phone number)_. Or you can contact the Montana Department of Agriculture at (406) 444-5600.