

# “B” Rated Weeds

A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant,  
but may have limited distribution in some counties

**Giant knotweed**  
*Polygonum sachalinense*

**Other common names:** Sakhalin knotweed,  
Japanese bamboo

**USDA symbol:** POSA4  
**ODA rating:** B



**Introduction:** It is native to one Japanese island and was introduced to North America as an ornamental plant. It was also promoted as a streamside soil binder. Though not as common as Japanese knotweed, it is easily recognizable by its huge leaves and 10' tall growth. Hybridization with Japanese knotweed is common.

**Distribution in Oregon:** The first documented site in Oregon was in Coos County in 1937. It can be found occasionally in many western Oregon counties where it is often the target of control efforts.

**Description:** Giant knotweed is a robust perennial, growing annually from woody rhizomatous roots. It blooms from August through September. Rhizomes of giant knotweed often have a diameter of 3 inches and may spread to 65 feet laterally. The stems are generally clustered, erect, hollow, and grow up to 10-11 feet tall. Leaves are alternate, oval and large, frequently 12 inches long, with a cordate or heart-shaped base. Flowers are small, creamy white and packed in racemes producing an abundance of nectar, popular with pollinators. Giant knotweed has the ability to sprout from both aboveground nodes and rhizomes in the presence of adequate moisture. Humans spread the species through yard waste dumping, or using contaminated dirt and ornamental plantings. Flood events are the most important mechanism for transporting the plant in individual watersheds.

**Impacts:** Giant knotweed is the largest of the knotweeds, enabling this species to dominate and out-compete native or beneficial plants. It poses a significant threat to riparian areas where it prevents streamside tree regeneration. Research indicates that giant knotweed produces allelopathic chemicals from the roots, which aid in its dominance and rapid colonization. Giant knotweed is a viable pollen source for Japanese knotweed, resulting in male fertile hybrids that are often confused with Japanese knotweed.

**Biological controls:** No approved biological control agents are available at this time.

