

Giant Knotweed (*Fallopia sachalinensis*)

Description

Tall perennial that creeps via rhizomes. Stems erect, numerous, branched, 2-6 m tall, reddish, hollow. Basal leaves lacking; stem leaves alternate, 20-40 cm long, the blades widely egg-shaped, the bases heart-shaped, the tips gradually tapered, long stalked; stipules tubular, entire.

Flowers in small axillary panicles; perianths 2-3 mm long, pale green or greenish-white, unequally 5-lobed, the outer lobes strongly winged.

Key Identifiers

- ✓ Bamboo like stems
- ✓ Leaves can reach 20-40 cm in length, with distinct heart shaped leaf base
- ✓ Often forms extensive rhizomatous root system colonies
- ✓ Hairs on the leaf undersides, especially along the midvein, are long and wavy in giant knotweed. These hairs are easiest to see with a hand lens during the spring and summer, often falling off later in the season.
- ✓ Flower clusters are generally shorter in length as the below leaf. Leaf and flower characters are most reliable when looking near the middle of a branch.

Location in Canada

BC, NB, Nfld, NS, Ontario, PEI and Quebec all report the presence of Giant Knotweed. Alberta is suspected to have a few ornamental locations of unconfirmed knotweed.

Resources

http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hra/Publications/invasive_plants/Knotweed_key_BC_2007.pdf

http://www.invasiveplantcouncilbc.ca/images/stories/documents/tips/Knotweeds_TIPS.pdf

Similar species

Japanese Knotweed (*F. japonica*) can be distinguished by the leaves, which are usually 3-10 cm, straight at the base, leaf tip abruptly pointed, leaf texture thick and leathery.

Hybrid Japanese Knotweed (*F x bohemica*) can be distinguished by the leaves, which are usually 5-30 cm, variable at the base, leaf tip variably pointed, leaf texture intermediate.

Elderberries (*Sambucus spp.*) have lance-shaped, pointed, and sharply toothed leaflets.



Tom Heutte, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

