Japanese Knotweed
(Mexican Bamboo)
*Fallopia japonica*

**Perennial**

Robust perennial herb that emerges early in spring & forms dense thickets, 3 – 9’ high. Stalks remain standing during winter. Sun or part shade.

**Where found:** Moist open areas (riverbanks & disturbed wetlands), road margins, & disturbed soils

Leaves oval, with squared base & pointed tip, 2 – 6” long.

**Stems thick & hollow** like bamboo; reddish-green, turning brown at first frost.

Flowers small greenish-white, in linear clusters along stem, August – September.

Fruit papery, winged capsules, containing 3-sided, shiny black seeds.

**Similar native plants:** None.

Harpwell Invasive Plants Partnership, 2015 (4/2015)
[Sources: Maine Invasive Plants, bulletin #2511; Invasive Plant Atlas of New England]
Japanese Knotweed (Fallopia japonica) Best Control Practices:
First, read the FAQs (see last page) to guide your decisions on How, When, Why, and What control efforts. Then, proceed with the following:

- Cut/mow plant to ground weekly June-fall. Fragments of the plant can take root; dispose of materials in trash; do not compost. Expect to repeat for 5 years or more.
- Or, cut 2-3 times during growing season to reduce size. Then, if chemicals are permitted, spray 2% glyphosate or triclopyr in late August before bloom time. Follow-up for 5-6 years. Herbicides are not effective during the growing season.

Note:
To see how this invasive plant causes problems for home sellers in Great Britain, go to: The Guardian, “Japanese Knotweed: the scourge that could sink your house sale”

Sources:
Casco Bay Invasive Species Network, Winning the War on Weeds
Michigan Natural Features Inventory, Invasive Species Best Control Practices, Japanese Knotweed
FAQs: To eliminate or control invasive plants in Harpswell?

Choosing a control strategy
Choosing a control strategy requires careful thought as to the size and severity of the infestation and its proximity to water and other natural resources. The Harpswell Invasive Plant Partnership (HIPP) urges land owners to use mechanical (as opposed to chemical) controls whenever possible. Herbicide application within 25 feet of the water is not allowed in Harpswell. Check the Town of Harpswell's Pesticide Ordinance.

Why control invasive plants?
Infestations of invasive plants damage the lands and waters that native plants and animals need to survive. They out-compete and displace native plant species. Livestock avoid grazing on many invasives (thistles/euphorbia, black swallow-wort), encouraging spread. Invasive seeds may also contaminate hay. Some invasives shelter mice, so increase the numbers of ticks (barberries), and others yield poisonous chemicals (euphorbia, black swallow-wort) that can affect human and animal health. Some invasive roots exude chemicals that poison neighboring plants (knapweed, black swallow-wort).

When is the best time to control invasive plants?
There isn’t one season that works perfectly for all invasives. When trying to prevent invasives from entering the seed-spreading period, manually attack them any time you can. But, when chemicals are needed, leaf-spraying must be done on green leaves, while the cut-and-paint stem applications are only effective during the late season, not when sap is actively flowing. Be sure to follow the guidelines advised on HIPP’s website to time your efforts.

Why avoid chemical herbicides?
The most commonly-used herbicides for invasive plant control are glyphosate (Roundup) and Triclopyr (Garlon 4 and 3A). Glyphosate is known to be mildly toxic to bees, which are already threatened. Triclopyr is slightly toxic to birds, fish, and aquatic invertebrates, and can cause severe eye damage.

Why use chemicals?
Sometimes, cautiously using herbicides is less disturbing to the environment than other possible control methods. At other times, the plant infestation is too large or dense to realistically remove mechanically. If chemicals are needed, follow professional advice for when and how much chemical to use. Using chemicals that are mixed too strongly can damage the visible leaves while never seeping into the root structure to kill the plant.

When using chemicals why not just use Roundup (or Triclopyr) for all the invasives?
Neither Roundup nor Triclopyr works reliably for every invasive plant. Following the guidelines advised on HIPP’s website will help you choose the right herbicide for the job, save you money, and minimize environmental damage.

Harpswell Invasive Plant Partnership Plant Fact Sheets
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