A Homeowner’s Guide to Getting Rid of Japanese Knotweed (DIY or with pro-help)

Option 1 (preferred because it is probably more effective and won’t kill the lawn or other garden plants, even though it requires more work and more equipment)

Spring and summer: Cut down the knotweed stems as close to the ground as you can get them roughly once every two weeks (i.e. when you mow your lawn). You can use hand loppers, a lawnmower or a weed-whacker. It is important to rake up the stem fragments (or collect them in the mower basket) and either burn them or put them in the trash. Do not compost this plant. Japanese knotweed can make new plants from stem fragments. Cut the knotweed for the last time in mid-August.

Either plan to hire a professional in the fall or make some purchases in preparation for DIY. The equipment you will need:

- A concentrated glyphosate herbicide
  - RoundUp Pro* is a common brand name and formulation - it is 41% concentration
  - Rodeo* is another option at 54% concentration, and is a safer for the environment, especially if the site being treated is near a body of water or storm drain
  - Note: You might not be able to find products this concentrated at hardware stores, but you can buy them online or from ag supply stores
- Injection equipment
  - There is a specialized herbicide injector that's available from Amazon, but it costs $125
  - A cheaper option (but a little less convenient to use because you'll have to keep refilling it) is a meat injector or veterinary syringe labeled in milliliters

In the fall: When the knotweed is 2-3’ tall (should be around the end of September if the last cut was made in mid-August), cut the knotweed stems about 6 inches above the ground and immediately inject 5 ml of Rodeo or 6 ml of RoundUp Pro into the hollow center of each stem. Read the herbicide label carefully and follow the precise recommendations for personal protective equipment. At a minimum, you should always wear closed-toe shoes, long pants, long sleeves and gloves while handling herbicides. If you get any herbicide on your skin, wash it off right away. Make sure you don't get any herbicide on the lawn or other plants you want to keep. Glyphosate is a broad spectrum herbicide and will damage or kill any vegetation it contacts.

Next year: Monitor for new growth of knotweed. You should see a decrease in stems, but don’t be surprised if you get some shoots coming back. Knotweed is very hard to kill. Repeat the steps above again for another year. Once stem density is reduced, plant something else in that spot (lawn, or even better, some native plants!) This will discourage invasive plant growth. Injection of herbicide into knotweed stems will not impact any plantings. It may take up to 5 years to completely eradicate a knotweed patch. It is very important that you encourage neighbors with knotweed to control it, or it will likely return.

*MIPN does not endorse any particular herbicide manufacturer or brand name. We understand that people have mixed feelings about herbicide. However, herbicide use is the only reliable method for Japanese knotweed control.
Option 2 (will probably damage the lawn or other plants but is easier, especially for a pro who will have all the equipment)

This spring/early summer: Cut down the knotweed stems as close to the ground as you can get them roughly once every two weeks (i.e. when you mow your lawn). You can use hand loppers, a lawnmower or a weed-whacker. It is important to rake up the stem fragments (or collect them in the mower basket) and either burn them or put them in the trash. Do not compost this plant. Japanese knotweed can make new plants from stem fragments. Cut the knotweed for the last time in mid-June.

Either plan to hire a professional to spray the knotweed in late summer or make some purchases in preparation for DIY. The equipment you will need:

- A concentrated glyphosate herbicide
  - RoundUp Pro* is a common brand name and formulation - it is 41% concentration
  - Rodeo* is another option at 54% concentration, and is a safer for the environment, especially if the site being treated is near a body of water or storm drain
  - Note: You might not be able to find products this concentrated at hardware stores, but you can buy them online or from ag supply stores
- Low volume/hand held spray equipment
  - There are low-cost hand sprayers at hardware stores

Late summer: Allow the knotweed to grow 2-3’ tall (should be around the end of July if the last cut was made in mid-June). Conduct treatment on a day when rain is not in the 24 hour forecast. Mix 7oz or Rodeo or 9 oz of Roundup Pro in a gallon of water by following the mixing instructions on the herbicide product label. You can mix it in the tank of the sprayer. Read the herbicide label carefully and follow the precise recommendations for personal protective equipment. At a minimum, you should always wear closed-toe shoes, long pants, long sleeves and gloves while handling herbicides. If you get any herbicide on your skin, wash it off right away. Spray the mixture on the leaves of the Japanese knotweed until they are thoroughly wet but not dripping. Expect treatment to damage or kill any grass and garden plants growing near or intermixed with the knotweed.

In the fall: If there is any new growth at the end of September, spray again.

Next year: Monitor for new growth of knotweed. You should see a decrease in stems, but don’t be surprised if you get some shoots coming back. Knotweed is very hard to kill. Repeat the steps again for another year. It may take up to 5 years to completely eradicate the knotweed patch. Once the knotweed is eradicated and no further spraying is needed, plant something else in that spot (lawn, or even better, some native plants!) This will discourage future invasive plant growth. It is very important that you encourage neighbors with knotweed to control it, or it will likely return.

Questions about this guidance?
Contact: Clair Ryan, MIPN Coordinator, mipn@mortonarb.org, 630-719-5649.

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