

# Knotweed Management Control Options For Nonurban Properties

#### FOREST HEALTH INVASIVE PLANTS FACT SHEET

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, Forest Health Program, March 2025

This fact sheet covers chemical and mechanical control options for multiple invasive plant species known commonly as knotweed.

# **Control Factors**

- Develop a long-term plan for eradication of knotweed, followed by the restoration of native plants.
- Most knotweed infestations will take at least three consecutive years of herbicide application to control. It will depend on the size of the infestation and how long it has been growing.
- The first year of control is the most expensive. Costs should go down in subsequent years.
- The effective herbicides that can be used on your nonurban property, in order of effectiveness, are imazapyr, aminopyralid, glyphosate and triclopyr products.
- Follow label instructions to determine the spray rate for treating knotweed and whether that herbicide can be used at your knotweed site.
- If near water or a shallow water table, use an aquatically safe herbicide containing imazapyr, glyphosate or triclopyr.
- Glyphosate and imazapyr will kill all plants sprayed, so treat only the knotweed and follow the label instructions to avoid harming non-target plants.



Stripes encircle the thick stems of knotweed plants. / **Photo Credit:** Robert Videki, Bugwood.org

- Aminopyralid and triclopyr are safe to use around most established grasses but will kill most everything else. Aminopyralid does not have an aquatically safe herbicide.
- Check the product label for the wait time before planting native vegetation on the treated site. It is typically a few days to a few weeks following application, though it can be up to two years.

## Steps for herbicide use

- Mow or cut the knotweed all the way to the ground, preferably from late June to the end of July.
  - a. Mowing/cutting is not required for effective control,

but it allows for safer application on short resprouts rather than full-size stems.

- b. Mowing/cutting is usually not needed after the first year of treatment.
- c. **DO NOT** move knotweed off site. Stack stems away from moist ground so they dry out.
- Spray the knotweed with a product containing imazapyr, aminopyralid, glyphosate or triclopyr, ideally in September, just before it starts flowering. This is when much of its energy is flowing to the roots.
  - a. Wait at least four weeks after cutting to spray. At least two feet of regrowth should be present.
  - b. Spray before flowering occurs to prevent impacts to pollinators.
  - c. Spray at least two weeks before the first frost is predicted.
- 3. Continue spraying in September in subsequent years until eradication is achieved. Cutting or mowing should not be needed.
- 4. Monitor for at least five years to ensure knotweed does not return.
- 5. Restore the site with native vegetation, following herbicide label recommendations. Trees and bushes are the best choices because they effectively shade out knotweed resprouts.



Workers build a pile of knotweed on a tarp to keep the cut leaves and roots isolated from soil so it cannot root and form new plants. / **Photo Credit:** Dr. Sigrid Resh, Michigan Technological University, and Keweenaw Species Management Area

If you want to avoid the use of an herbicide on your property, the combined manual control approach of tarping and cutting/pulling is the most effective option. Tarping can be done on a large scale but can be time-consuming and very intensive. Therefore, tarping is used mostly on a small scale and on isolated populations. The adjacent QR code



will bring up a webpage detailing <u>effective manual</u> <u>techniques</u> for tarping knotweed.

### Tarp/Pull Technique

- Either lay a durable synthetic tarp or carpet remnant over the knotweed and trample the plants with your feet, or mow/ cut the knotweed and then cover with the tarp. Extend the tarp at least 5-10 feet past the edge of the infestation and place rocks or other heavy objects on the tarp to keep it from blowing away.
  - a. Keep the tarp in place for at least three to six years. The longer the tarp remains, the fewer stems will need to be pulled. However, it will also be a longer period of time before native plants can be replanted.



A worker catalogs a roadside patch of knotweed growth. / **Photo Credit:** Randy Westbrooks, Bugwood.org

- b. Tarping can be started any time of the year.
- c. If mowing/cutting, **it is best to do before flowering.** Keep all knotweed stems in the infested area.
- d. Before placing a tarp, adding mulch to mowed/cut knotweed can help prevent rips or holes in the tarp.
- e. Inspect the tarp regularly for tears or rips and repair or replace if needed.
- 2. Inspect the area outside the edge of the tarp every 2-3 weeks during growing season for escaping or isolated knotweed plants; if found, pull or cut them. Place pulled/cut stems on top of the tarp to dry.

- 3. Restore the site with native vegetation **after the tarp is removed**. Trees and bushes are the best choice because they effectively shade out knotweed resprouts.
- 4. Keep monitoring for at least five years after eradication to ensure knotweed does not return.

To learn more about knotweed, including identification and specific herbicide recommendations, please view the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's <u>knotweed brochure</u>.

It is recommended that landowners hire a contractor to control knotweed on their property. The Wisconsin DNR offers a <u>list of</u> contractors organized by region. See the online version of this document for links.



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Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921

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