

# Giant knotweed

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## Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Fallopia sachalinensis*

**AKA:** *Polygonum sachalinensis*, *Reynoutria sachalinensis*

**Native to:** Japan

**Habitat:** River banks, roadsides, railway banks, waste ground and disturbed areas. Thrives in damp soil

Giant knotweed is a herbaceous perennial usually 2-3m in height (can grow to 5m), occasionally growing in dense thickets but it less aggressive than Japanese knotweed. Stems are bamboo like, straight, with regular nodes and have purple-red flecks.

Leaves are oval to oblong-shaped with a cordate (heart-shaped) base. They are up to 40cm long and are green, or yellow in the autumn. Underside is scattered with long wavy hairs. Leaf stalk 1-4cm. Tiny greenish-white flowers occur in grape-like clusters. Orange rhizome (roots) are generally knotty and have leathery outer layer (appearing like ginger).

Spreads vegetatively from small pieces of the plant, commonly through the movement of contaminated soil containing rhizome fragments.

Where established, giant knotweed forms dense colonies shading out and displacing native species. It can also impede water flow by obstructing streams and rivers.

**Giant knotweed is listed on Schedule 9 of The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and as such, it is an offence to plant or otherwise allow this species to grow in the wild.**



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## Key ID Features



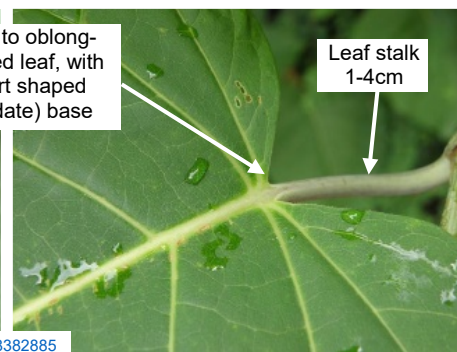
Usually grows  
2-3m in height

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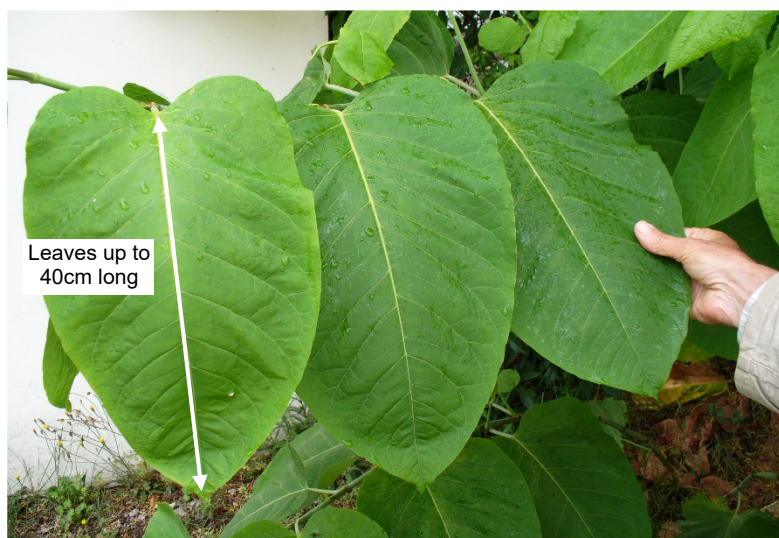
Underside of  
leaf is scattered  
with long wavy  
white hairs

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Oval to oblong-  
shaped leaf, with  
heart shaped  
(cordate) base

Leaf stalk  
1-4cm



Leaves up to  
40cm long

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**Report any sightings via; CEDaR Online Recording - <https://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>, iRecord app or Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - <http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting>**



# Identification throughout the year

New growth forms from pink-red buds at the crown. Small red shoots, turn green (asparagus-like) and become more like bamboo. Tall and lush green in summer. Yellow leaves in the autumn and begins to die back leaving brown brittle stems in the winter.

## Similar Species

### Japanese knotweed

Invasive non-native  
(*Fallopia japonica*)



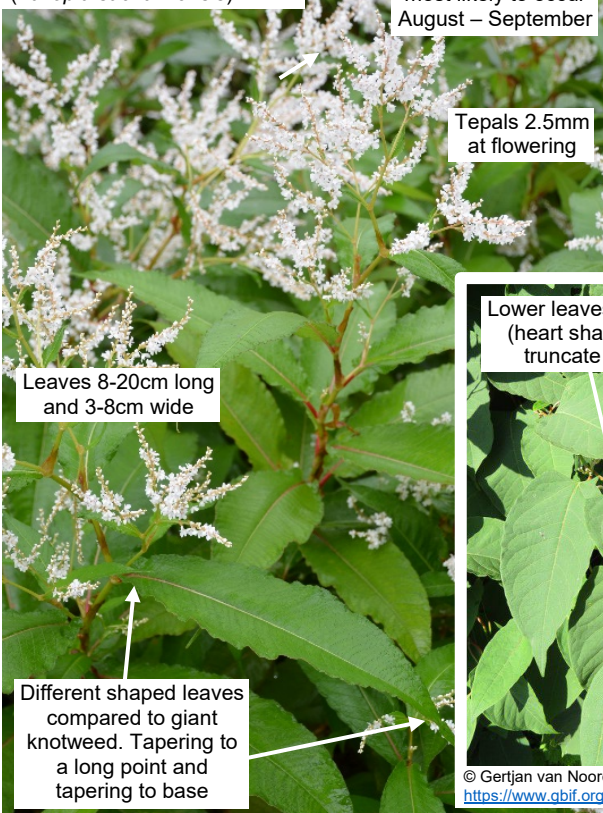
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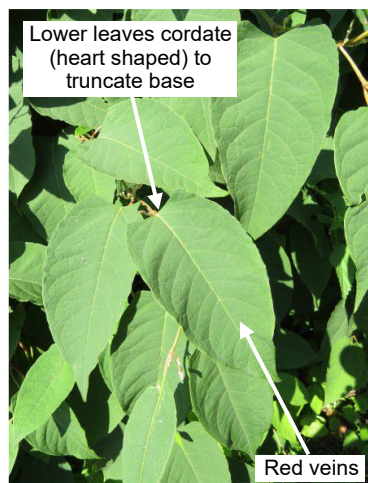
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### Himalayan knotweed

Invasive non-native  
(*Fallopia sachalinensis*)



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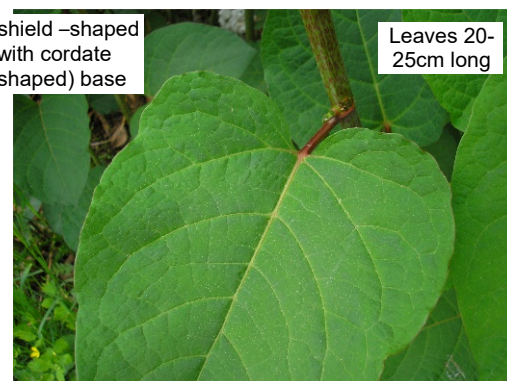
### Hybrid Japanese knotweed

Invasive non-native  
(*Fallopia bohemica*)



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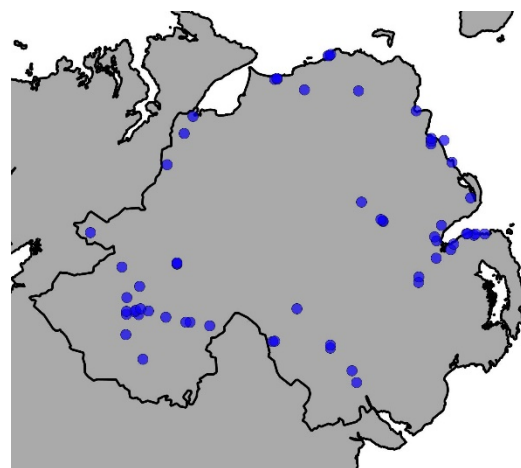
Oblong shield-shaped leaf, with cordate (heart shaped) base



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## Distribution

Widespread across Northern Ireland



Source: NBN atlas Northern Ireland - <https://northernireland-species.nbnatlas.org/search?q=fallopia+sachalinensis>  
Check website for current distribution

## References and further reading:

- Booy, O., Wade, M. and Roy, H. 2015. Field Guide to Invasive Plants and Animals in Britain. Bloomsbury. London.
- CABI *Persicaria wallichii* (Himalayan knotweed) data sheet <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/120210>

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