

*Fallopia japonica*  
Japanese knotweed

**Why Observe?**

*Fallopia japonica* is a harmful invasive plant in North America. In addition to degrading natural habitats and crowding out native plants, its aggressive growth damages building foundations, infrastructure, and hardscaping. Managing *F. japonica* must be timed to coincide with life cycle stages. Your observations as part of the Pesky Plant Trackers campaign are needed so we can understand this plant's phenology and plan effective management.



**Tips for Identification**

*Fallopia japonica* is a large perennial shrub-like plant with non-woody stems. Stems are smooth, green with reddish-brown blotches and hollow between swollen nodes where leaves attach. Leaves are alternate, simple, with square bases and pointed tips. Clusters of creamy white to greenish flowers appear at upper leaf axils. Flowers are female only (gynodioecious). Japanese knotweed is part of a complex that includes Giant and Bohemian (hybrid) knotweeds.



Be aware there is variation from individual to individual within a species, so your plant may not look exactly like the one pictured. If you are uncertain whether or not a phenophase is occurring, report a "?" for its status until it becomes clear what you are observing after subsequent visits.



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### Initial growth

New growth of the plant is visible after a period of no growth (winter or drought), either from above-ground buds with green tips, or new green or white shoots breaking through the soil surface. Growth is considered "initial" on each bud or shoot until the first leaf has fully unfolded. For seedlings, "initial" growth includes the presence of the one or two small, round or elongated leaves (cotyledons) before the first true leaf has unfolded.



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### Leaves

One or more live, fully unfolded leaves are visible on the plant. For seedlings, consider only true leaves and do not count the one or two small, round or elongated leaves (cotyledons) that are found on the stem almost immediately after the seedling germinates. Do not include fully dried or dead leaves.



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### Flowers or flower buds

One or more fresh open or unopened flowers or flower buds are visible on the plant. Include flower buds or inflorescences that are swelling or expanding, but do not include those that are tightly closed and not actively growing (dormant). Also do not include wilted or dried flowers.



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### Open flowers

One or more open, fresh flowers are visible on the plant. Flowers are considered "open" when the reproductive parts (male stamens or female pistils) are visible between or within unfolded or open flower parts (petals, floral tubes or sepals). Do not include wilted or dried flowers.



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### Fruits

One or more fruits are visible on the plant. For *Fallopia japonica*, the fruit is tiny and capsule-like, maturing to shiny black-brown, and is enclosed within remnant flower parts that become tan, papery "wings".



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### Ripe fruits

One or more ripe fruits are visible on the plant. For *Fallopia japonica*, a fruit is considered ripe when its outer covering has turned tan, dry and papery.

**Phenophases not pictured:** Recent fruit or seed drop