ALBERTA invasive species COUNCIL
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Last Updated December 2016

Himalayan Knotweed

Persicaria wallichii Greuter & Burdet syn Aconogonon polystachyum, Polygonum polystachyum

(Aka Kashmir plume, bell-shaped knotweed)

Alberta Regulation: Unregulated

Glen Miller www.streamwebs.org

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Overview:

Himalayan knotweed is a perennial, herbaceous plant, with a woody root.[1] It is native to the Himalayan mountain range of south Asia.[2] Like all the other invasive knotweeds, it was introduced as an ornamental. It reproduces both by seed and vegetatively via creeping rhizomes.[2] Vast networks of rhizomes facilitate monopolization of space and resources. Because this plant requires moist soils, infestations are commonly along waterways and flooding can dislodge rhizome fragments facilitating dispersal.

New shoots arise from overwintering roots in early spring. Himalayan knotweed grows fast and reaches full height by late June.[2] Dense infestations can shade out all shorter vegetation. Flowering begins late summer and continues into fall, depending on location. All knotweeds die back for the winter, the leaves falling but skeleton stems remaining. The abundant leaf litter prevents the germination of native plant species.[1]

Control options are intensive in terms of both labour and cost. The creeping rhizomes must be completely removed from a site, which means sifting soil to capture rhizome pieces as small as 2 cm.[2]

Habitat:

Himalayan knotweed can grow in loamy, silty, or sandy soils and can tolerate a pH up to 7.4.[2] It does require full sun and moist sites.

Identification:

Stems: Are branched in the upper half, reddish, and grow to 2-3 m tall. The hollow, bamboo-like stems are hollow and can be up to 3 cm in diameter. Stems have jointed nodes, each surrounded by a papery stipule.[2]

Leaves: (Description based on mature, mid-stem leaves.) "Leaves are broadly lance shaped, up to 20 cm long, and less than half as wide. Copious stiff hairs on leaf margin, veins on leaf underside with numerous stiff hairs." Leaves have a long, pointed tip.[2]

Flowers: Borne in a loose, spreading panicle. Flowers are pinkish-white and are perfect (both male and female organs).[2] Seeds are smooth, shiny black, 3 mm long and encased in a papery fringed capsule.[2] Seeds can be wind dispersed.[1]

Prevention:

Learn to recognize Himalayan knotweed and report new infestations. Do not purchase or grow this plant. Since new infestations can arise from small rhizome fragments, soil from infested areas should not be moved.

Control:

Grazing: Can reduce shoot size and density but must be repeated through the growing season to be effective.[2] Invasive plants should never be considered as forage.

Mechanical: Cutting and mowing must be repeated through the growing season, for several years to be effective. Digging the roots or hand-pulling the stems stimulates aggressive re-sprouting.[2] All removed plant material should be disposed of in landfill-bound garbage.

Chemical: Currently there is no herbicide registered for use on Himalayan knotweed.

continued next page

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Always check product labels to ensure the herbicide is registered for use on the target plant in Canada by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency. Consult your local Agricultural Fieldman or Certified Pesticide Dispenser for more information.

Biological: None researched to date for Himalayan knotweed.

Great Britain Non-native Species Secretariat

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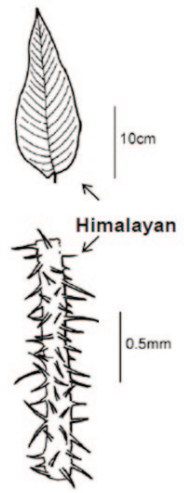

Cindy Roche, Key to the Identification of Invasive Knotweeds in British Columbia

REFERENCES

1 Himalayan knotweed. Alaska Natural Heritage Program. University of Alaska Anchorage. http://aknhp.uaa.alaska.edu. Accessed: September 2015.

2 Wilson, Linda M. 2007. Key to Identification of Invasive Knotweeds in British Columbia. B.C. Min. For. & Range, For. Prac. Br., Kamloops, B.C.