

Japanese Knotweed Invasive Species Series

As you can't help but notice, the invasive species, Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) is sprouting all over town (and the state). Common reed (*Phragmites australis*) is evident in a number of roadside wetlands. And Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) has begun to flower, seemingly everywhere there is a damp, sunny spot.

As a property owner you may wonder how you can prevent or mitigate an infestation of one or more of these highly invasive plants.

The best way is to not let invasives get a foothold on your property by minimizing soil disturbances and immediately planting and mulching exposed soil with native species of plants and grasses. Try to make sure that fill material brought to your property doesn't come from a place where there are invasive plants.

If you find invasive plants growing on your property, it is best to deal with it before it becomes established by hand pulling when plants are small; trying to pull the entire root. If too big to pull the entire root, hand cutting (not mowing) the plant will work best. This method will have to be repeated many times before the plant is weakened. After pulling or cutting, double bag the remnants and leave in the sun until the plant is not viable.

When the plants have been cut, covering the infested area with black, 7 mil poly tarp for a period of time can kill the roots. After removing the tarp, plant native species in the denuded area and hand pull any invasives that try to reappear. Lastly, for large infestations, herbicides with glyphosate as the active ingredient can be effective, but may be best left to professionals for application, especially in wetlands where a licensed applicator is required.