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for the natural
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movement



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For more information, or to join
Wild Ones Natural Landscapers,
here's how to reach us:

Phone

(920) 730-3986
(877) 394-3954 (Toll-Free)

Mail

PO Box 1274
Appleton, WI 54912-1274

E-Mail

ExecDirector@wildones.org

WebSite

www.wildones.org

Celebrating natives
plant and natural
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Grapevine

By Maryann Whitman

A Word to the Wise...

We don't usually report on the ramifications of invasive plants growing across the ocean but this item deserves serious thought, as it is a scourge that we share.

In the United Kingdom and in parts of Europe the presence of Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), on a property is causing mortgages to be denied.

It grows to 7 and 8 feet in the U.K.'s mild climate, spreads rampantly by roots that are known to crack patios and even foundations, and getting rid of it is a long, expensive process. While a property may be declared free of knotweed after 3 to 5 year's treatment with glyphosate, recontamination can happen all too easily. "Even the tiniest bit of leftover root can cause regrowth, which means that digging up knotweed is not so much a matter of making a hole, as it is of carrying out a large-scale excavation. The "crown" or "head" of a knotweed infestation can be the size of a bull's head, with scores of roots radiating out from it like strands of hair," says one remediation expert.

Disposal of removed live knotweed from ones property can be a costly and complicated process in another sense. Under the Environmental Act (1990), in the U.K., the same rules that govern disposal of toxic waste apply to knotweed. Anyone removing this waste must be appropriately licensed. Simply dumping it in trash or landfill is strictly forbidden, and can be punished by fines or imprisonment (Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981).

Knotweed, according to the USDA (<http://plants.usda.gov>) grows in all but nine of the United States, and three provinces in Canada. Wild Ones members may go to 2010Vol23No3Journal.pdf, in the Members Only section of our site, under Archived Wild Ones Journals, to find an article by Janet Allen titled "Invasives on the Horizon: Japanese Knotweed: Godzilla of the Plant World".