

Knotweed

Polygonum aviculare L. & Polygonum erectum L.

There are several varieties of knotweed that occur in the western region, but two are more prevalent in our area. They are prostrate knotweed, *Polygonum aviculare L.*, and erect knotweed, *Polygonum erectum L.* These knotweeds are members of the buckwheat family, *Polygonaceae*. Both prostrate and erect knotweed can be found in lawns, especially high traffic areas. Because knotweed likes dry, compacted ground, it is often found along roadways or paths.



Polygonum aviculare L.



Polygonum erectum L.

Prostrate and erect knotweeds are annuals that reproduce by seed. The joints or nodes can be covered with a thin papery sheath. Both knotweeds have wiry stems that radiate from a small taproot. Prostrate knotweed stems are bluish-green. The stem can reach 4 to 24 inches long, growing in all directions to form a dense mat. Erect knotweed stems are yellowish-green. The slightly rigid stem can reach 8 to 24 inches high and is branched near the top. The leaves on prostrate knotweed are bluish-green, alternate, oblong, narrowed at the base, pointed at the tip and about 1 inch long and ½ inch wide. The leaves on erect knotweed are also small (1/4 to 1 inch), light green, oval, and alternate. They may be covered with powdery mildew. The greenish-white flowers for both knotweeds are located in the leaf axils and are very small. A magnifying glass may be necessary to get a good look at the flowers.

Cultivation either by rototilling or hoeing offers excellent control. In moist soil knotweed can be hand-pulled with very little effort. There are chemicals the homeowner can use for control in landscape, turf and bare ground areas. Glyphosate (Roundup®) and glufosinate products are listed as a spot treatment for knotweed control in landscape and bare ground areas. As always, apply all chemicals according to label directions.

RESOURCES

Weeds of the West, 9th Edition

Weeds of the North Central States, http://www.ag.uiuc.edu/~vista/html_pubs/WEEDS/49.html

WSU Hortsense <http://pep.wsu.edu/hortsense>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=POAV>