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“Helping Others Grow”

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SMG's Grow Native!

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Switch to Red-stemmed Dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) from Japanese Knotweed

One look at the picture to the right and you'll realize why the Japanese knotweed is considered invasive. The fact that it's also known as Mexican Bamboo may tell you all you need to know about *why*. While it is not a bamboo, it spreads like one, forming colonies, and is very hard to control.

Also known as fleecflower and huzhang, Japanese knotweed is a perennial that was introduced here in the late 1800s as an ornamental, imported from Asia. Currently it's found in all but 5 states and one of those is Hawaii - little chance for state-to-state spread there!

When we know better, we do better, right? So instead of knotweed, try the Red-stemmed dogwood, also called Red Twig Dogwood. It blooms in May and June, producing lovely clusters of small white flowers. I've had one for about 10 years and while it has produced a “baby” nearby, it is definitely under control. I particularly like the shape, which fans out slightly from the base. Mine is in full sun, but it will tolerate partial shade. It's in a spot that isn't accessible by hose, so I can attest that the only water it's ever gotten is what Mother Nature has provided. It will tolerate clay soil (that's what I

have), as well as wet soil.

The Red Twig can get 6-9 feet tall and can spread up to 12 feet, but I can only imagine how many years that would take, given the 3-4 foot spread that mine has made. Birds and butterflies like it, but, thankfully, deer don't bother it or mine would have succumbed long ago. It's become a favorite in my yard and I bet it will be in yours as well!

References:

- University of Georgia. <https://www.eddmaps.org/distribution/usstate.cfm?sub=19655>
- Missouri Botanical Garden. <https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=c300>
- US Department of Agriculture. Invasive Plant Species. <https://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/profile/japanese-knotweed>



Japanese Knotweed - Randy Westbrooks, Invasive Plant Control, Inc., Bugwood.org
