



# CUTTING JKW AND MAKING A DRYING STACK



Summer 2022

Cutting a fully-grown patch of 10-foot-high JKW creates a lot of plant material. That material needs to be handled carefully because a node on a JKW stalk is capable of taking root if left in contact with moist soil. The most efficient (and safe) way to handle all that material is to let the stalks dry on the site where the patch exists. We're calling it the "On-site Dry & Die" strategy.

The Warren Conservation Commission developed a neat stacking method that facilitates drying. The success of this strategy depends on three things:

- Keeping the plant material away from contact with soil to prevent it from re-rooting.
- Making a Stack that is stable so it is not at risk of being carried away in a heavy rain.
- Not putting root/rhizome material into the Stack.

A Drying Stack has three layers: (1) Some kind of impervious surface -- plastic sheeting or landscape cloth to lay on the ground. (2) A base to allow for airflow. A wooden pallet is great, but rocks, logs, or layers of sticks will do the trick -- anything that creates some space/distance. (3) The JKW stalks.

The Stack is given shape by placing four wooden stakes at each corner of a 3-4' square/rectangle. Five-foot grade stakes work best, pounded securely into the ground.



After building the drying 'chamber', cut or pull the Knotweed. Less mature plants will pull more easily and you may get some rhizome or roots at the end of the stalk. More mature plants may be difficult to pull and will require cutting. Loppers or hand clippers work well.

Spread the stalks evenly across the chamber, in one direction, with all the cut ends facing toward the same side. On the first pull/cut of a patch you'll most likely need to fold the 8-10 foot knotweed stalks in half so they don't hang out beyond the Stack. Then do another layer, with cut ends of the stalk pointing to the opposite side of the chamber. Now do a layer perpendicular to those layers, with ends again all pointing to the same side. And finally another layer with cut ends pointing to the opposite of that last layer.

You will now have four layers of stalks with cut ends aiming in all four directions. Repeat until the Stack is full or you run out of JKW. All this layering makes the Stack stable and it maximizes the exposure to air of the cut ends of the stalks.

If you have any large rhizomes or root ball masses **do not** put them in the Drying Stack. They will remain viable for a lot longer than the stalks and will sprout new growth. Either create a

separate drying chamber for root masses (just make sure they are not at risk of running away in a heavy rain), take them to Green Mountain Compost in Williston for hot composting or give us a call and we'll help you find a way to dispose of the material. You can store the roots in black bags but it will take a very long time for them to die in that moist environment; much better for them to have a safe way to dry.



**Revisit the patch every 2-3 weeks to pull new growth and add to the Stack. And to make sure your Stack is stable. Do this throughout the growing season.**

You'll probably find at some point that the re-growth pieces are too small to stay securely on the drying pile. In that case, you can either carve out a little bowl-shape at the center of the composted stalks. Or collect them in a black bag or other container and take them some place else to safely dry and die. Again, we can help with that.



Put a sign on one of your Stack's stakes so people know what you're doing and know not to disturb the pile. We can provide you with a sign.

By October you will have a very nicely composted pile of Knotweed. Ready for you to replenish the next season with whatever comes up.

Get in touch:

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