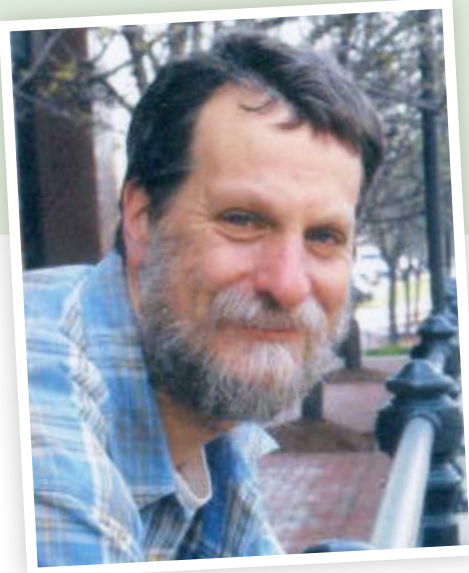


# The Faces of Urban Forestry



**Greg Gerritt**  
Environmental/economist  
activist

Providence,  
Rhode Island



## Fighting a Non-toxic War Against Invasive Plants

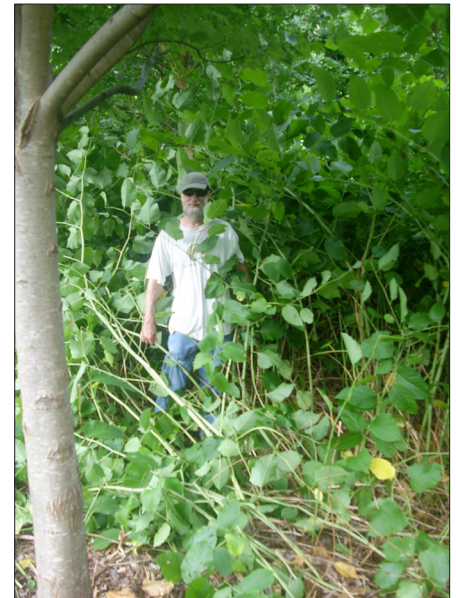
Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) is considered one of the world's 100 worst invasive species. This small, bamboo-like weed tree from Asia destroys our native woodlands, especially in alluvial areas next to rivers and lakes. "Its dense shade squeezes out everything," says Greg Gerritt. "The only things that thrive under it are snails, mice and snakes," he says.

“Having a better urban forest is the most important thing in the world. I understand how important trees are to all that is needed in our neighborhoods. (But) Japanese knotweed is crowding out everything. Nothing can grow under it!”

— Greg Gerritt

Greg and the group he founded, Friends of the Moshassuck River, are fighting this plague on a parcel of land that adjoins a city park. Planting tall-growing native trees is a non-toxic method of control with the goal of eventually creating a closed canopy that will shade out the invasives. With trees provided through Providence's 2020 plan to plant 40,000 by the year 2020, the first trees have already been installed by volunteers on the parcel adjoining to the Moshassuck River. More are planted each year and Greg reports, "We are already seeing results under some of first trees we planted."

The restored site will eventually mimic New England's original forests, providing not only species diversity but greater vertical structure that benefits wildlife.



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A joint project of U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry, the National Association of State Foresters, and the Arbor Day Foundation. For more information visit [arborday.org/faces](http://arborday.org/faces)