

**A GUIDE TO
IDENTIFYING,
LOCATING
AND
CONTROLLING
HIMALAYAN
BALSAM**

Nice but nasty!



HIMALAYAN BALSAM

Impatiens glandulifera

NATIVE RANGE

Western and Central Himalayas.

CURRENT HABITAT

Widespread throughout the region particularly on riverbanks, common on roadside verges and waste ground.

SPECIES DESCRIPTION

A tall attractive plant with pink/white flowers and explosive seed pods. First introduced to the UK by plant collectors in the early nineteenth century. Spread is by seed alone, with each plant capable of producing thousands of seeds. Seeds are viable for between 3 and 5 years.

Due to the plants ability to produce vast amounts of seed it has now spread throughout the country resulting in a loss of biodiversity where established due to the suppressing of native vegetation.

Himalayan Balsam can result in riverbank erosion in winter months when die back has occurred and vast areas are left bare and exposed. Although easy to see during the summer months a lack of dead stems during the winter makes identification difficult.



IDENTIFICATION FEATURES

STEMS

Jointed, green/red in appearance with leaves coming from the stem joints or nodes. Hollow sappy stem which is fleshy and brittle. In winter months can form 'hay' like mats of straw coloured stems.



LEAVES

Dark green in colour with a reddish mid rib along the centre and a finely serrated edge.



FLOWERS

Trumpet shaped flower pink/white in colour with a sweet scent, produced between July and October



SEEDS

Seed pods hang on stalks and explode when ripe scattering dark coloured seeds approx 4-7mm in size over a wide area.

CONTROLS

The aim of all controls is to prevent the plant flowering and setting seed.

MECHANICAL CONTROL

Cutting or pulling can be an effective form of control and must be completed before the onset of flowering, these works must continue year on year until no new growth is present.



CHEMICAL CONTROL

Himalayan Balsam responds readily to herbicide application and can be treated with either a total herbicide such as glyphosate or a selective product such as 2,4-D Amine. As with cutting or pulling it is vital that herbicide treatment is completed before the plant has formed seed and continues until no new growth is present.

If herbicides are to be used on or near a watercourse then prior approval will need to be sought from the Environment Agency.

LEGISLATION

It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to plant or cause to grow wild any plant listed in schedule nine part two of the Act. Himalayan Balsam has been added to this list in April 2010.

