

Himalayan balsam

Himalayan or Indian balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) was introduced to Britain in 1839, but escaped from gardens and rapidly colonised riverbanks and areas of damp ground. **Himalayan balsam grows in dense stands that suppress the growth of native grasses and other flora. In the autumn, the plants die back, leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion.**

- For this reason, please prevent the plant from seeding wherever you see it.

Facts and figures

Native range: Western Himalayas

Stem: Pinky-red colour

Up to 3m tall - tallest annual plant in Britain

Hollow and jointed

Sappy and brittle

Leaves: Spear-shaped, with serrated edges

Shiny and dark green with a dark red midrib

Up to 150mm long

Opposite or in whorls of three

Flowers: Purplish-pink to pale pink

Slipper-shaped, on long stalks

June – October

Seeds : White, brown or black

Produced from July – October

4-7mm diameter

4 – 16 seeds per pod

Control: Control measures should aim to prevent flowering and if this is achieved before seeds are set, eradication is possible in two to three years.

Cutting/mowing/strimming: cut at ground level using a scythe, before the flowering stage in June. Do not cut earlier as this promotes greater seed production in any plants that regrow. Cutting should be repeated annually until no more growth occurs.

Pulling: shallow-rooted plants can be pulled up very easily and disposed of by burning or composting, unless seeds are present.

Useful links: http://www.arkive.org/species/ARK/plants_and_algae/Impatiens_glandulifera/

