

HIMALAYAN BALSAM

Impatiens Glandulifera



Photos courtesy of GB Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNSS)

WARNING: This pest plant explodes!

The bright Himalayan balsam plant hides a dark secret. Among those pink flowers, seed pods are developing that explode when ripe, firing 100's of seeds up to 7 metres in all directions. This enables this pest plant to spread and dominate new areas very quickly. Himalayan balsam is the tallest annual plant in the UK. It overshadows native plants and quickly takes over areas, creating what's called a monoculture. This is bad news for the insects and wildlife that need native plants to survive and in the winter the balsam dies back leaving large areas of bare earth that is easily eroded. It's called 'invasive' for good reason and it is illegal to allow it to spread into the wild.

Please help us to fight back!

How you can help...

- If you have a camera do take a photo of these instructions

- Get pulling:

- Where?

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- When? Before those seeds are ripe, between early May to mid-June, although you can pull later in the year if the plants haven't developed seed pods yet.
- How? Grip the lower stem and pull up the shallow root – it comes up with a satisfying tug! Snap the stem between the root and bottom node. Leave the plant lying on the ground alongside the path – it's classed as a 'controlled waste' so mustn't be removed off site. Take care not to block the path, culverts or watercourses.

- Be Biosecurity Aware:

- Avoid going near the balsam when those seed pods are exploding.
- Keep to the footpaths to minimise dispersal of the seeds on your footwear.
- If walking from a balsam-infested area to an area that's clear, do check the soles of your footwear and brush them off to avoid assisting its spread!



For more information

