

# Himalayan Balsam

## *Impatiens glandulifera*



Himalayan Balsam plants grow in dense stands that suppress the growth of native grasses and other flora.

In autumn the plants die back, leaving the ground bare of vegetation, and therefore liable to erosion.

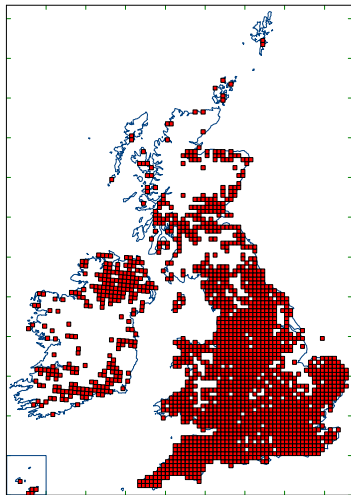
A local project is currently underway with the aim of tackling Himalayan Balsam in this area.

The project is a collaboration of fishing clubs, nature conservation groups and landowners.

We are asking local landowners and other interested parties to help us in this task.

The responsibility for the control of Himalayan balsam rests with the landowner or tenant of the land.

Please look out for this plant and control it on your land.



Introduced to Britain in 1839, it escaped from gardens and rapidly colonised river banks and areas of damp ground.

Distribution map - Himalayan Balsam  
Source: Botanical Society of the British Isles (2010)

A downloadable identification sheet for this species is available at [www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org)

Separate leaflets are available outlining the legal requirements and responsibilities for landowners.

The correct disposal of plant material is vital because there is a high risk of spreading the problem further. Contact the Environment Agency for advice on disposal.

Environment Agency - Tel: 08708 506 506  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

Further information may also be found on the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology web pages:  
[http://www.ceh.ac.uk/sci\\_programmes/AquaticPlantManagement.html](http://www.ceh.ac.uk/sci_programmes/AquaticPlantManagement.html)

# Control methods for Himalayan Balsam



The image above shows the early spring growth, or rosette stage. The mature stems are also pinkish-red, hollow and jointed, often with some branching. Leaves and side branches originate from stem joints. The stem is sappy and brittle. The shiny dark green leaves are lance-shaped, have serrated edges, a dark red midrib and can be up to 150mm long. They grow on the stem in whorls of three. Purplish-pink flowers, held on long stalks, appear from June to October.

## Control

It is important to control the plant whilst stands are still small. If nothing is done stands can get so large that control becomes very expensive and all the while, seeds are spreading establishing new populations.

Control measures should aim to prevent flowering, and are best carried out before July for maximum effectiveness. Repeat control later in the season may be needed to remove any late flowering plants. Seeds are short-lived so regular control should exhaust the seed bank in 2-3 years.

## Non-chemical control

### Cutting

Cut at ground level using a scythe, machete, flail or strimmer before the flowering stage. Cutting earlier than this will promote greater seed production from 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.

### Grazing

Grazing by cattle and sheep is effective from April throughout the growing season. It should be continued until no new growth occurs.



The characteristic purplish-pink slipper-shaped flowers appear in June. When the seed pods mature, they explode when touched, scattering the seed up to 7m away. Seeds are also spread by water and they may remain viable for up to two years.



The white, brown or black seeds are produced from July to October and are 4-7mm in diameter.

## Chemical control

### Glyphosate

Treat with a weed wipe in mixed stands, or by foliar spray in dense stands, before flowering. If all plants are controlled, then spraying should only be required for two to three years.

### 2,4-D amine

Treat during early spring at the rosette stage for effective control. This selective herbicide will not kill grasses which help to stabilise banks and so is often preferable to glyphosate.

You must obtain approval from the Environment Agency if planning to use herbicides near water-courses. Tel: 08708 506 506