



Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), with its showy pink flowers may look attractive but it is a troublesome 'invader'. It comes from the foothills of the Himalayas, and was brought over by plant collectors in the 19th century. It has spread rapidly along river banks, streams and in wet woodlands, out competing our native plants. If left unchecked it forms dense stands. As well taking the place of our native wildflowers, it also reduces the variety and abundance of invertebrates in the soil below, and can draw pollinators away from native species. HB dies back in the autumn leaving bare ground which can cause bank erosion.



Controlling Himalayan Balsam

Balsam is an annual plant, the seedlings are visible in May and the plants grow rapidly flowering in July (depending on the season). By late July/early August it forms seed pods, which when ripe explode scattering seeds widely.

The plants are shallow rooted and pull up easily. This should be done before the seed pods form. The pulled plants can be left in a dry place on the ground to rot down. Any seeds that have formed should be burnt and not composted.

This species is listed in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act in England and Wales therefore, it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause it to grow in the wild.