

Himalayan balsam

Impatiens glandulifera

Description

Can be distinguished vegetatively from natives, which have alternate leaves. Sometimes referred to as "Indian" or "Himalayan balsam".

Habit

Herbaceous annual, reaching 2 m (6.5 ft) in height; succulent.

Leaves

Opposite to whorled (at least some of them), stalked, egg-shaped to elliptic, sharply and closely saw-toothed; 6-15 cm long.

Stems

Erect to ascending; often branched; glabrous; 2 m (6.5 ft) tall; purplish-tinged; 6-sided in cross-section.



Flowers

Purple, magenta, pink, blue or white in color;
irregular, borne on elongated axillary peduncles,
3 sepals, pouched, with short recurved spur;
blooms in summer.

Fruits and Seeds

Seed pod, elastically dehiscent, 1.5-2.5 cm long, many-seeded.

Habitat

Native to the Himalayas. Found in moist habitats including stream and riverbanks, ditches, meadows, swamps and floodplain forests.

Reproduction

By abundant, explosive seed, which also spreads by water.

Similar

Orange jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) and Pale touch-me-not (*Impatiens pallida*).

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Hand-pulling, mowing or cutting; effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides.

Credits

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