

Managing Himalayan Balsam

page 1



This species may still be considered ornamental but once in the wild it dominates habitats as one of the most invasive species in the British Isles.



What is it?

Now the tallest annual plants in the British Isles, Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) was introduced from the Western Himalayas 150 years ago. It was intended to be an ornamental for Victorian gardens but quickly spread into the wild. Even though it is an annual and dies every year, the large quantity of seeds allows it to thrive. Each plant produces at least 500 seeds and these are catapulted up to 7m from the parent plant by the slightest disturbance of the seedpods. They usually exploit linear corridors such as rivers or disused railway lines.

What is the problem?

For existing habitats:

- grows densely and shades out native plants
- biodiversity is affected as the reduction in plant diversity leads to a reduction in insects & birds in the area.
- increased risk of flooding through dead stems washed into & clogging up watercourses.

For human activity:

- restricts access to riverbanks & paths for anglers, bank inspection and amenity use.



What does the law say?

- The Environmental Protection Act 1990 - places a duty of care on all waste producers and Himalayan Balsam is identified as a controlled waste. This means it has to be dealt with within your legislative requirement for waste management.

How do you deal with it?

The invasive nature of this plant means that it is difficult to eradicate. However, once the plant has been identified (see page 2) a plan for its control can be organised, always remembering that it should be treated as a controlled waste.

It is advisable to contact your Environmental Co-ordinator and the Environment Agency for guidance as soon as possible.

Contacts:

- Environment Agency web site at www.environment-agency.gov.uk
- Tel: 08459 333 111

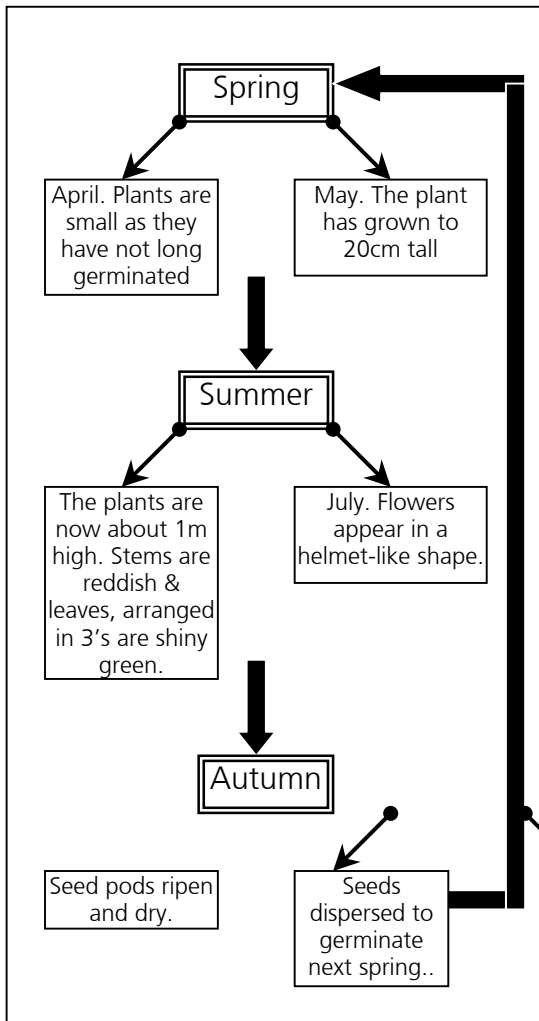
Managing Himalayan Balsam

page 2

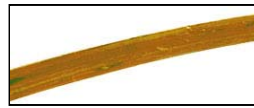


Himalayan Balsam Identification

Life Cycle



Checklist



	Features	Yes	No
STEM	Hollow		
	Reddish with ridges running the length		
	Maximum height up to 3m		
LEAVES	Arranged in threes		
	Shiny & green with reddish central vein		
FLOWERS	Narrowly oval with jagged edges		
	Appear in July		
SEEDS	Either white/pink or red/pink		
	Helmet like shape		
SEEDS	Seed pods develop in autumn		
	Pods open at slightest touch, catapulting seeds up to 7m		
SEEDS	Seeds 4-7mm in diameter		
HABITAT	Linear corridors such as riverbanks, paths		
GENERAL	Aggressive		
	Yellow		
	at		



*If **YES** is greater than **NO** –Treat as Himalayan Balsam or get a 2nd opinion from your site co-ordinator.*

Himalayan Balsam – Do's & Don'ts

- Do's***
- Try to identify Himalayan Balsam as soon as possible.
 - Act responsibly in preventing its spread.
 - Call your environmental co-ordinator or the Environment Agency in early.

- Don'ts***
- Waste time as control may take time to devise & implement.
 - Dump soil that may contain seeds or other plant material.
 - Disturb the seedpods.