

What?



- Himalayan balsam is a non-native plant often found growing along rivers, disused railway lines, wet woodland, ditches and damp meadows.
- It grows up to 2.5m tall. It has large 'policeman's helmet' pink-purple flowers. Leaves are spear shaped, have small red teeth at the edge and occur in twos or threes from the same point on the stem. The stem is reddish hollow, sappy and brittle.
- Each plant produces more than 500 seeds before it dies in the autumn. When the seed pods are ripe, the slightest touch causes them to burst open catapulting and dispersing the seeds up to 7m away.

Why?

- Himalayan balsam is one of the most invasive species in the UK as it dominates habitats, grows densely and shades out native plants.
- When the plants die back it can leave the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion.
- It is illegal 'to plant or otherwise encourage' the growth of Himalayan Balsam. This could include cutting the plant or roots and disturbing or moving surrounding soil that may contain root material unless as part of an eradication process.



Do ✓

- ✓ Help remove balsam by pulling the plant up as they come into flower in June or July. The plant is an annual, so if caught early, it can be stopped from seeding and spreading
- ✓ Wear gloves to protect your hands



Don't ✗

- ✗ Don't enter any area of Himalayan balsam during treatment
- ✗ Don't disturb plants if the seed pods are visible, as this could help spread the seed
- ✗ Don't excavate or move soil that may contain seeds or other plant material without specific instruction
- ✗ Don't stockpile any material suspected of containing Himalayan Balsam within ten metres of gullies, watercourses or drains

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