

Invasive non native species: Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*)

Himalayan Balsam grows up to 2.5 m tall and has flowers ranging from deep pink to white. It thrives in damp shady places and is mainly found along slow flowing water courses. The seeds are released explosively reaching a distance of up to 7m from the plant; one plant can produce up to 800 seeds which float and remain viable for 2 years.



Environmental impact: Himalayan Balsam is very shallow rooted which can promote erosion of river banks because of its annual die-back. The flowers are sought out by native insects for the nectar, potentially to the detriment of native plants which are also typically shaded out by it too.

Health and social impact: the plants can change the appearance of river banks.

Economic impact: dense stands of Himalayan Balsam can impede water flow so increasing the likelihood of flooding at times of high rainfall. The increased erosion of river banks due to its shallow root system, annual die-back and crowding out of native plants which could stabilise the banks may also contribute to increased flood risk.

Himalayan Balsam currently costs the British economy £1 million a year to treat and control.

Biosecurity: you can help stop the spread of invasive non native species, which can cause problems and are expensive to treat, through the following actions:

CHECK your equipment, clothing and footwear
CLEAN everything thoroughly, use hot water if possible

DRY everything, as some species can survive for up to two weeks in damp conditions



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