

Himalayan Balsam

Impatiens glandulifera



What are invasive species?

Invasive species (IS) are species that are introduced to an area outside of their native range and have the ability to outcompete native species. IS can be introduced intentionally or unintentionally.

Why are invasive species a problem?

Once they establish, invasive plants can reproduce quickly because they have no natural predators or pathogens to keep them in check, and they often become the dominant species in an ecosystem. This can have devastating effects on the environment. IS can displace native plants by monopolizing space, light, water and other resources needed for growth. They can completely alter native plant communities and drastically lower biodiversity. IS can also adversely affect the economy and human health, and interfere with recreational activities.

CONCERN

Himalayan balsam exhibits a high reproductive rate through prolific seed production (up to 2500 seeds per plant). The plant's seed pods explode when disturbed, shooting seeds out to a distance of up to seven metres from the plant. An alternative common name is touch-me-not, indicating the plant's sensitivity to touch and explosive seed dispersal. The typical habitat for this plant is nearby water, allowing its seeds to spread quickly and over great distances. Seeds can germinate underwater. Himalayan balsam germinates earlier than many native plants and forms dense patches, preventing native plants from establishing. In addition, it has a weak root system. The combination of weak roots and out-competing native ground cover means that when the plant becomes established in riparian zones it can increase erosion. The flowers produce floral nectar that attracts bees, competing with native plants for these pollinators. Himalayan balsam can secrete allelopathic chemicals, which inhibit the growth of other plants in a local area.

CONTROL METHODS

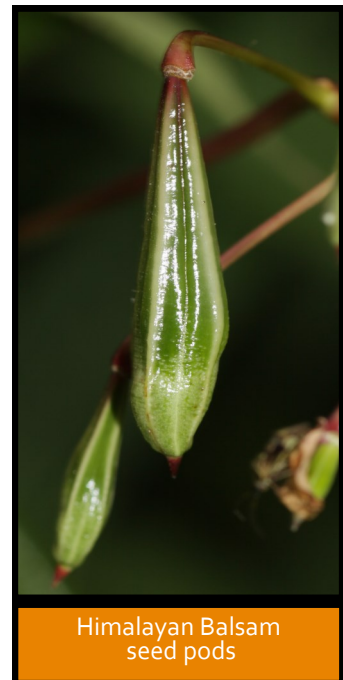
Since this species often occurs along watercourses, it is recommended that all control efforts first be focused on upstream populations, to avoid downstream spread. Timing is crucial for the management of Himalayan balsam. Manage the plants in the spring and early summer, before seed set. Seeds begin to appear in August. If management is attempted after seed set, you run the risk of dispersing seed during management, which is the plant's primary method of reproduction.

PULLING

The best method for removal of Himalayan balsam is pulling, since the roots are weak and easily dug out. Pulling should occur before plants go to seed in mid to late August. Himalayan balsam seeds are contained within seed pods that, when mature, will explode when touched, dispersing seeds and perpetuating the infestation. If pulling must occur after the plants have gone to seed, carefully remove seed pods before plants are pulled. Do this by gently cutting the stem below the seed pods, and immediately placing the stem and seed pods into a garbage bag. Alternatively, place a bag over the entire plant and cinch it shut near the plant's base, ensuring that all seed pods are contained in the bag. Pull the plant up. This will keep all seeds within the bag and prevent dispersal. Pulling must be repeated for several years because seeds in the ground remain viable for multiple years.

MOWING/ CUTTING

Mowing stands of Himalayan balsam is an effective control method, providing the area is mowed repeatedly to guarantee full mortality. Mowing should be done as soon as flowers appear, to reduce chances of seed development. If hand cutting, cut plant at ground level and repeat annually.



Himalayan Balsam seed pods



BURNING

Burning has always been an effective method of controlling vegetative growth. A limitation of this method is that burning does not necessarily kill the plant, and often results in vigorous re-sprouting from stumps.

CHEMICAL CONTROL

The PEIISC does not provide advice on chemical control measures at this time. If you are using chemical controls, it is imperative that all local legislation and manufacturer's instructions be followed. The herbicides may damage surrounding vegetation and their use is prohibited within the 15-metre buffer zone surrounding wetlands and watercourses in PEI.

Studies have shown that Himalayan balsam plants treated with herbicide during flowering were still able to produce seeds and therefore continue to spread.

DISPOSAL

Place invasive plants in a clear plastic bag and secure. Write plant name (or "invasive plant") on the bag. Place in waste cart (you can also have up to 2 excess bags beside your cart) OR bring them to any Waste Watch Drop-Off Center and pay applicable waste disposal fee. Businesses and residents disposing of loads greater than what would fit in a half-ton truck require a permit from the Department of Environment Energy, and Climate Action [Special Waste Disposal Permit | Government of Prince Edward Island](#). After receiving the permit, businesses and residents will be directed to an appropriate final disposal facility. Please note that only loads for which permits have been issued will be accepted at these facilities. Please check the IWMC sorting guide www.iwmc.pe.ca/sort (type Invasive Species in the search window) to ensure these instructions are up to date.

GARDEN ALTERNATIVES

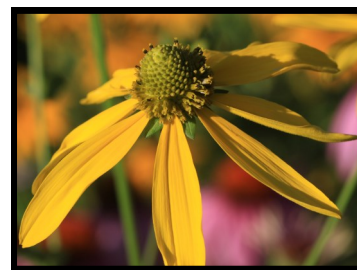
There are many native plants and non-invasive horticultural plant alternatives available for Himalayan balsam. Please refer to the Invasive Alien Species of PEI: Himalayan balsam fact sheet for more information on garden alternatives.



Fern-leaf bleeding heart
Dicentra 'King of Hearts'



Spotted Joe-Pye weed
Eupatorium maculatum



Cutleaf coneflower
Rudbeckia laciniata

PREVENTION

The most effective and cost efficient way to avoid infestations of invasive species is to learn about potential invaders and be on the look out for them before they get a chance to establish. To learn more about how you can get involved in preventing invasives in PEI, contact the PEI Invasive Species Council at: peiinvasives@gmail.com.

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How can you help?

Here are a few things you can do to help stop the introduction and spread of alien invasive species:

- Learn more about invasive species in PEI, including how to identify species of concern
- Choose native species whenever possible
- Carefully inspect and clean clothing, gear, animals, and vehicles before visiting a new natural area
- Never dump garden or pond waste in a natural area
- Report your IS sightings to the PEIISC.

How to report:

Record any invasive species sightings at:

<https://www.eddmaps.org/report/>

OR

<https://www.inaturalist.org/>

OR contact

peiinvasives@gmail.com

