

# Himalayan Balsam

## *Impatiens glandulifera*



### What are invasive species?

Invasive species are species that are introduced to an area outside of their native range. They can be introduced intentionally or unintentionally.

### Why are invasive species a problem?

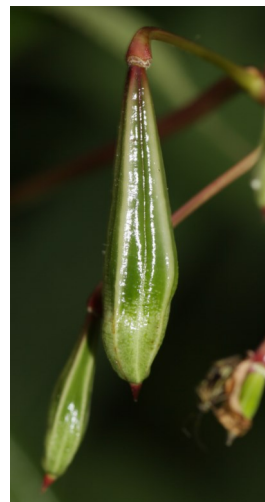
Once they establish, invasive plants can reproduce quickly because they have no natural predators or pathogens to keep them in check, and they often become the dominant species in an ecosystem. This can have devastating effects on the environment. Invasive species can displace native plants by monopolizing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

### CONCERN

Himalayan balsam exhibits a high reproductive rate through seed production. It germinates earlier than many native plants and forms dense stands, preventing native plants from establishing. Himalayan balsam has a weak root system which does not stabilize the soil, and when it establishes in riparian zones it can increase erosion. The flowers produce a floral nectar that attracts bees, competing with native plants for these pollinators.

### CONTROL METHODS

Since this species often occurs along watercourses, it is recommended that all control efforts first be focused on upstream populations, to avoid further spread downstream.



Himalayan Balsam  
seed pods

#### 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. 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.

#### BURNING

Burning has always been an effective method of controlling vegetative growth. Like cutting however, burning does not necessarily kill the plant, and often results in vigorous re-sprouting from stumps.



## CHEMICAL CONTROL

Chemicals is not recommended by the PEI Invasive Species Council. Surrounding vegetation may be damaged by the herbicides and their use is prohibited near wet-land environments in PEI.

Studies have shown that plants treated with herbicide during flowering were still able to produce seeds. Application of herbicide during early growth, followed by repeated treatments is effective at controlling regrowth. Herbicides show mixed effectiveness unless used repeatedly .

## DISPOSAL

Plants removed from a site should be transported in plastic bags to a waste management facility for incineration. In addition, it is important that native species be planted where invasive plants were removed to prevent future invasions. Repeated monitoring of habitat where Himalayan balsam was removed is essential to ensure that new sprouts and shoots are identified and removed.

## GARDEN ALTERNATIVES

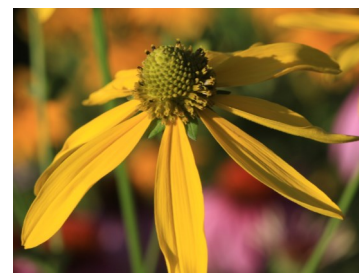
There are many native plants and non-invasive horticultural plant alternatives available for Himalayan balsam. Please refer to the Invasive Alien Species of PEI: Himalayan balsam fact sheet for more information on garden alternatives.



**Fern-leaf Bleedingheart**  
(*Dicentra 'King of Hearts'*)



**Spotted Joe-Pye Weed**  
(*Eupatorium macculatum*)



**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 Spotter's Network at: [peiinvasives@gmail.com](mailto:peiinvasives@gmail.com).

Prince Edward Island  
Wildlife Conservation Fund



Photos provided by and copyright belongs to: Beth Hoar of Green Thumb Photography

## 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
- When disposing of invasive species, they should be placed in a clear or dark plastic bag and taken to Island Waste Management for incineration
- Report a sighting

## How to report:

If you think you have seen this invasive species on PEI, please report your sighting to the PEI Invasive Species Council at:

[www.peiinvasives.com](http://www.peiinvasives.com)

or email

[peiinvasives@gmail.com](mailto:peiinvasives@gmail.com)