

# HIMALAYAN BALSAM

## ISSUES...

Himalayan balsam is a non-native, highly invasive plant introduced from the western Himalayas. An escapee from gardens it is now widespread and is typically found on river banks, in hedgerows, woodlands, verges and grasslands.

### How and Why it's a problem:

- Long growing season from May to October
- Each plant can produce up to 800 seeds
- Explosive seed capsules spread seeds up to 2m
- Rapidly forms vast, tall dense masses of plants
- Smothers and excludes native species
- Deters pollinators from native species
- After die back, exposes bare soil to risk of erosion and loss of land

### LEGAL STATUS AND LANDOWNER RESPONSIBILITY

Himalayan balsam is listed under the EU Invasive Alien Species of Concern and Schedule 9 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to England and Wales.

### What does this mean for you?

As a landowner, you have a legal responsibility to manage, control and where possible eradicate this species from your land and not allow it to spread in to the wild.



AMERICAN SKUNK CABBAGE



GIANT HOGWEED



JAPANESE KNOTWEED

# HIMALAYAN BALSAM

## ADVICE FOR LANDOWNERS



For advice and support on the control of Himalayan balsam and other freshwater invasive non-native species please contact:

**South Cumbria Rivers Trust**

T: 015395 30047 | E: [jen@scrt.co.uk](mailto:jen@scrt.co.uk)

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## Identification:

### FLOWERS

- Purplish-pink to pale pink
- Slipper-shaped on long stalks
- Flowers: **JUNE – OCTOBER**
- Seeds: **JULY – OCTOBER**



### LEAVES

- Spear-shaped with serrated edges
- Shiny and dark
- Up to 15cm long



### STEM

- Pinky-red colour
- Smooth (no hairs)
- Up to 2.5m tall
- Stem has nodes (notch), including bottom node at ground level
- Hollow and jointed
- Snappy and brittle



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### What can I do?

Active control is simple and effective, but requires commitment.

#### Aim:

To prevent the plant flowering, or at least prevent the setting of seeds. (Flowering / seeding times may vary depending on the weather.)

### When to tackle it?

This plant spreads by seed. Seeds continue to germinate throughout the season so it is essential to repeat the control later in the season. Seeds can lie dormant in the soil for up to 3 years.

- First treatment early in the season **JUNE**
- Repeat treatments to capture late germination **AUGUST** and **SEPTEMBER**
- **REPEAT** treatment for a minimum of **3 YEARS**

## How do I tackle it?

### Manual control

- Mechanical – Mow or strim at ground level below the bottom node to prevent recovery and regrowth
- By hand – It is easily pulled. Ensure stem is broken below bottom node to prevent it re-rooting.

### Chemical control

Glyphosate herbicides will remove the plant.

 When spraying next to a water course you will require:

- An Environment Agency AQUAHERB permit
- A PA6AW spray certificate
- Aquatic approved herbicide

### Grazing / stock control

Introduce grazing and trampling early in the season when seeds are germinating and the plants are tender and sweet. This is useful for fenced off river banks.

### On-going management

Maintenance of a dense sward of grass will help to suppress germination of seeds.

Where possible, re-seed area after control.

**WARNING**  
DO NOT UNDERTAKE ANY  
CONTROL ONCE SEED  
CAPSULES ARE EXPLODING

