

Bothered by Balsam?

Common questions answered

What is Himalayan balsam?

A fast-growing non-native annual plant which rapidly spreads and takes over large areas.

How is it spread?

Its seed pods 'pop' to release seeds with force, spreading them several metres. Seeds are often carried downstream by rivers and streams thus spreading the plants even more rapidly.

How did it get here?

Himalayan balsam was introduced by the Victorians as an attractive ornamental garden plant - in fact another name for it is '*Poor man's orchid*'.

Where is it found?

Himalayan balsam can be found in a range of moist habitats, although it is most likely to be found close to water sources. It prefers mild and damp climates.

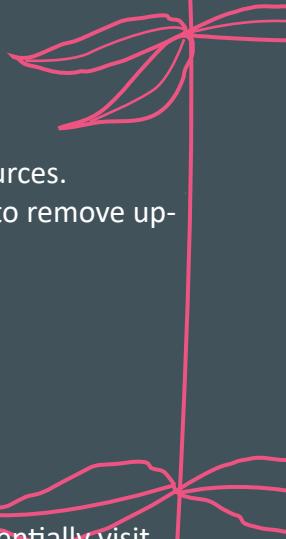


What's the problem with Himalayan balsam?

- It outcompetes native plants for space, light, nutrients and pollinators
- It spreads rapidly and can take over an area very quickly
- It dies in winter leaving riverbanks bare and subject to erosion.

How can I control it?

- Get your community involved – many hands make light work.
- Map the area to get an idea of the scale of the problem – as well as identifying any seed sources.
- Remove plants logically – starting at the top of the catchment and working your way down to remove upstream sources of seeds.
- Repeat clearance work annually.
- Hand pull or strim plants and revisit sites throughout the season.
- Ensure you have landowner consent before starting any mapping or removal work.
- You're not alone, get in touch with us for help and advice.



What about the bees?

Bees are very attracted to Himalayan balsam as a source of nectar. This means that they preferentially visit Himalayan balsam plants rather than native ones. This has implications for the pollination of native plants as well as crops. **There are lots of other native or non-invasive species which are good sources of pollen. Seeds for bees are available to buy online and at Tŷ Hyll.**

If you have any further questions or would like some help or advice with tackling Himalayan balsam get in touch: info@snowdonia-society.org.uk | 01286 685498



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