

Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*)

Description

It typically grows to 1 to 2 m high, with a red-tinged stem, and lanceolate leaves 5 to 23 cm long. The flowers are pink, purple or white with a hooded shape, 3 to 4 cm tall and 2 cm broad; the flower shape has been compared to a policeman's helmet, giving rise to the alternative common name Policeman's Helmet. After flowering, the plant forms seed pods 2 to 3 cm long and 8 mm broad, which explode when disturbed, scattering the seeds up to 7 meters.

Key Identifiers

- ✓ Bamboo-like stem; Smooth, usually hollow and jointed.
- ✓ Red tinged stem and leaves.
- ✓ Sharply serrated leaves.
- ✓ Opposite or whorled leaves, usually 3.
- ✓ Exploding fruit capsules.

Location in Canada

A common ornamental plant located in most urban areas across Canada. In Alberta there are escaped patches along water courses within the urban areas of Edmonton, Red Deer, and Parkland County. Pigeon Lake is believed to have the biggest infestation of escaped plants in Alberta.

Resources

<http://www.invasiveplants.ab.ca/Downloads/FS-HimalayanBalsam.pdf>

Biology of Invasive Alien Plants in Canada. 9. *Impatiens glandulifera*

Similar species

Orange jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) - Native to North America. Flowers orange, brown-spotted, or –mottled. Leaves alternate and coarsely saw-toothed.

<http://linnet.geog.ubc.ca/Atlas/Atlas.aspx?sciname=Impatiens%20capensis>

Touch-me-not Jewelweed (*Impatiens noli-tangere*) - Flowers yellow, sparingly flecked with brownish purple. Leaves alternate and coarsely saw-toothed.

http://em.ca/garden/native/nat_impatiens_noli-tangere.html

