

QUICK FACTS

HIMALAYAN BALSAM



Common aquaculture plants can become invasive if they are not native to Alberta. Wind and water can spread seeds and plant fragments beyond your garden, which creates new populations that can dominate ecosystems and ruin habitat for native species.

DON'T LET IT LOOSE!

Here's how you can help prevent the spread of Himalayan balsam:

- 1.** Never release aquarium or domestic pond water, plants, dead or live animals into water bodies.
- 2.** If you see Himalayan balsam, report it to the Aquatic Invasive Species Hotline or use EDDMapS Alberta from your smartphone.
- 3.** DO NOT pull or dig it after seed pod formation as seeds will explode and start new plants. Careful removal prior to flowering or pod formation may be beneficial in exhausting the plant's seed bank.
- 4.** Know the law! Himalayan balsam is listed as prohibited noxious under the Weed Control Act and is a prohibited species under the Fisheries (Alberta) Act. It is illegal to sell, import, transport or possess prohibited species. Penalties can be up to \$100,000 and/or a year in prison.



HIMALAYAN BALSAM QUICK FACTS:

- Himalayan balsam is an annual semi-aquatic plant native to India and was likely introduced to North America as an ornamental plant.
- Himalayan balsam leaves are simple, oblong-shaped with serrated edges, arranged oppositely on a square, hollow stem; leaf veins and stems have red to purple tinges. Flowers are irregular with five purple to pink to white petals and resemble an English policeman's helmet. Round brown seeds are released explosively when a ripened capsule is disturbed or dried.
- It is only able to reproduce by seed; however, a single plant can produce up to 4,000 seeds that launch up to ten metres in all directions.
- Himalayan balsam infestations can displace native vegetation, reducing habitat for wildlife and native plants as well as drawing pollinators away from native species as it is a highly prolific nectar producer.
- Dense, tall stands near irrigation ditches, channels, or stormwater management ponds can lead to increased erosion and flooding as it leaves the soil bare when it dies back in winter.
- Control of Himalayan balsam can be difficult, especially once well established. Methods for control or eradication by trained personnel include careful hand digging for isolated or small populations, repeated mechanical cutting, and chemical treatment. The objective for control is to repeatedly remove the plant before they set seed.
- Care must be taken with hand digging and cutting to ensure all plant fragments are removed and disposed of. Fragments can root by the nodes and seeds can drift with water movement or animal dispersal, resulting in new infestations.
- Himalayan balsam has already been found in multiple locations in Alberta.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES, CALL:

1-855-336-BOAT (2628)