

Himalayan Balsam

What?

- ❑ Himalayan Balsam was introduced to the UK 150 years ago as an ornamental plant, but quickly spread into the wild
- ❑ thrives because each plant produces more than 500 seeds before it dies in the autumn. When the seed pods are ripe, the slightest touch causes them to burst open catapulting and dispersing the seeds up to 7 m away
- ❑ it is often found growing along rivers, disused railway lines or in similar linear corridors.



Identification

- ❑ it grows during spring to autumn and dies in winter
- ❑ it grows up to 2.5 m tall
- ❑ the stem is pinky red, hollow, sappy and brittle
- ❑ leaves occur in two's or three's from the same point on the stem, are spear shaped with serrated edges, shiny and dark green with a reddish mid-rib
- ❑ flowers, which are similar to a Foxglove or a large Busy Lizzie, are purplish pink, carried on long stalks and appear from June to October
- ❑ seed pods, which are brown/black, are produced from August to October
- ❑ it has a musky smell.

- ❑ **avoid environmental harm:** dead stems washed into and clogging up watercourses cause an increased risk of flooding
- ❑ **avoid prosecution:** it is illegal "to plant or otherwise encourage" the growth of Himalayan Balsam. This could include cutting the plant or roots and disturbing or moving surrounding soil that may contain root material unless as part of an eradication process.

Why?

- ❑ **avoid environmental harm:** as one of the most invasive species in the UK as it dominates habitats, grows densely and shades out native plants

Questions

- 1 Why is Himalayan Balsam a problem in the UK?
- 2 Where is Himalayan Balsam on this site?
- 3 What can be done to stop Himalayan Balsam spreading?

Do

- ✓ **IMMEDIATELY** stop all work within 7 m of the suspect plant and contact a line manager for instructions if it is thought Himalayan Balsam has been identified
- ✓ inform a line manager if you notice damage to the fencing enclosing Himalayan Balsam.

Don't

- ✗ enter an identified area of Himalayan Balsam during treatment

- ✗ disturb the seedpods
- ✗ excavate or move soil that may contain seeds or other plant material without specific instruction
- ✗ double handle material suspected on containing Himalayan Balsam, but if this is unavoidable do so on an impermeable surface
- ✗ stockpile material suspected to containing Himalayan Balsam within 10 m of watercourses, gullies or drains
- ✗ track plant through Himalayan Balsam – it will cause it to spread.

Title: Given by:	Date:
Site:	

Name	Company	Signature

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