

Impatiens glandulifera

Invasive to Maine

Himalayan Balsam
Policeman's Helmet

Upland
Fields, Water's Edge, Developed Areas

Leaves



Photo by Wikimedia user Mnolf



Look for bright green, lance to oval shaped leaves with a pink midrib. Leaves are serrated and have a whorled arrangement in groups of 3, rarely in pairs or in groups of 4.

LEAF ARRANGEMENT	LEAF TYPE	LEAF/LEAFLET SHAPE	LEAF/LEAFLET EDGE
 ROSETTE	 SIMPLE	 LOBED	 TOOTHED
 WHORLED	 COMPOUND-PALMATE	 OVAL	 SMOOTH
 OPPOSITE	 COMPOUND-PINNATE	 LANCE-SHAPED	 WAVY

Plant



Photo by Wikimedia user Wassily



Look for a upright plant up to 2m tall with large lance shaped leaves. The stems are large and have nodes. It can be found in large patches or solitary.

Stem



Photos by Wikimedia users Rob Hille, Peter Valic



Look for a six sided, hollow reddish stem. The stem is 'fleshy' not woody. The roots are very shallow and the base of the stem is slightly bulbous.

Seasonal Change



VS user Greenfive, Flickr user Derek Lilly



It blooms from June through October. Flowers are white-pink to purple-pink and are trumpet shaped. Ripe seed pods are narrow and explode when disturbed.

Similar Species

Himalayan Balsam is similar to other Impatiens species like native jewelweed. Himalayan Balsam is much larger and has whorled leaves, unlike jewelweed which has alternate leaves. It can also be confused with purple loosestrife, however loosestrife has hairs on the stems.

Did You Know?

Himalayan Balsam was brought to the UK for horticultural use in the 1840's. It was praised for being easy to grow and for its beautiful flowers. It is native to the Indian Himalayas.

Researched and created by: Caroline Casals

Help us improve this species card! Contact us with your updates.



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