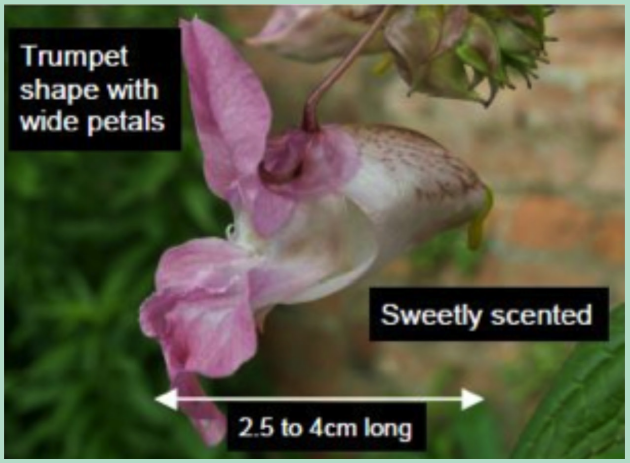
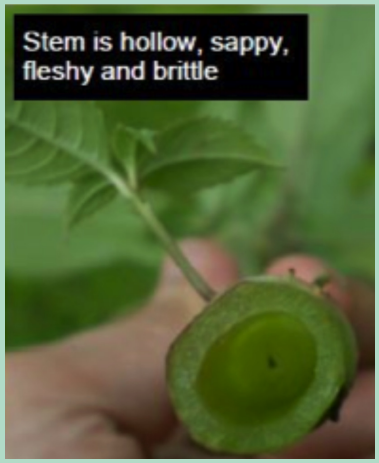
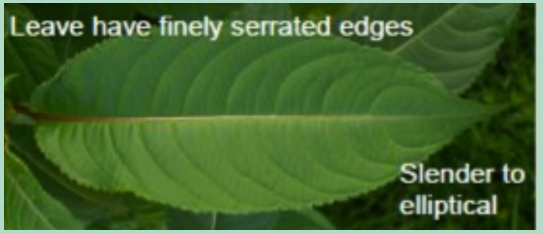
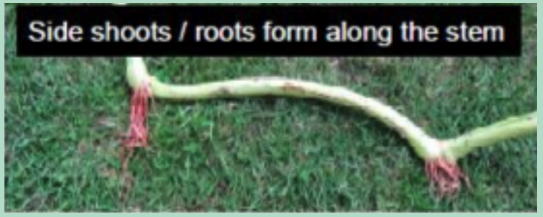
Himalayan Balsam

Key ID Features









Picture No. 1 All Key ID Features Courtesy of GBNNSS

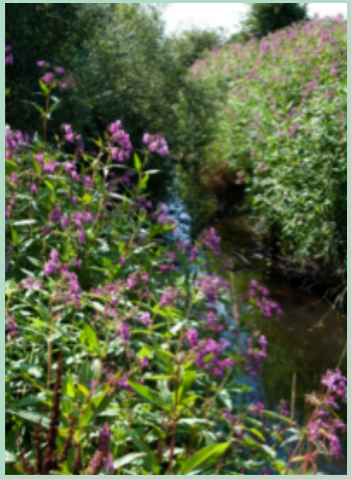
NIEA Northern Ireland Environment Agency
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

An Agency within the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

invasivespecies Ireland

Himalayan Balsam

Picture No. 2 Courtesy of GBNNSS.



Picture No. 3 Courtesy of GBNNSS.

Picture No. 4

Picture No. 5.

Picture No. 8 Courtesy of RPS Group PLC.

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- It grows in dense thickets, often along waterways (see picture no. 3).
- Individual plants reach 2-3m have translucent fleshy stems, pink-purple slipper-shaped flowers and large oval pointed leaves with obvious teeth around their edges (see above and pictures no. 2 and 5).
- Each tooth carries a small globular ‘gland’ and produces large numbers of flowers which are followed by ‘seed pods’ about 25mm long (see picture no. 1 bottom left).
- When mature and dry, the fruits split open explosively if touched, flinging the seeds over 6m away from the parent plant, thus helping the species to quickly spread to new sites (see picture no. 4). Each plant can produce hundreds of seeds which explode from ripe seed pods and spread easily by wind, water, animals and humans.
- In the autumn, the plants die back, leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion, leading to knock on effects such as the increased siltation of fish spawning grounds as well as bank instability and therefore increased flood risk (see picture no. 6).
- Shallow roots which can be easily manually uprooted early in the season (see picture no. 1 bottom right).
- Be aware that the plant has a wide germination period, with emerging seedlings frequently growing alongside more mature plants.

If you see any examples of this species or any other alien invasive species please enter your records at www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI and take photos if possible.