



# Management Measures for Widely Spread Species (WSS) in Northern Ireland

## Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*)

As per Article 19 requirement of EU Regulation 1143/2014  
*on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of  
invasive alien species*

*Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*

<b>Himalayan balsam</b> <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	
<b>Description</b>	<p>Himalayan balsam is a non-native invasive terrestrial plant. It is a tall annual plant, reaching 2m in height; it has translucent fleshy stems, pink-purple slipper-shaped flowers and large oval pointed leaves. Flowers produce seed pods, 25mm in length, and as they mature and dry, they explode if touched. Each parent plant can produce about 2,500 seeds, which can float downstream to a new site.</p>
<b>NI Status</b>	<p>It is widespread across Northern Ireland. It is frequently seen along water courses in thick continuous stands, as well as damp woodlands, flushes and mires.</p>
<b>Pathways</b>	<p>Originally ornamental, but became a garden escapee. Flowers produce seed pods, 25mm in length, and as they mature and dry, they explode if touched. Each parent plant can produce about 2,500 seeds, which can float downstream to a new site.</p>
<b>Aim</b>	<p>To contain, and reduce the extent of Himalayan balsam, with localised eradications being carried out in high priority areas.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eradicate populations of Himalayan balsam, prioritising vulnerable sites</li> <li>2. Ensure strict biosecurity when working in proximity to Himalayan balsam to avoid further spread.</li> <li>3. Where populations are discovered in new, high priority sites, attempt eradication and return to monitor or remove new growth.</li> </ol>
<b>Prevention</b>	
<b>Border and pathway actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Himalayan balsam is already widely established across Northern Ireland.</li> <li>- Under the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation, as well as Article 15 (2) of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, it is an offence to plant this species or allow it to grow in the wild.</li> <li>- Under the EU Invasive Species Regulation, it is also an offence to import into the EU, keep, grow or cultivate, transport (to, from or within the EU; except to facilitate eradication), place on the market, use or exchange this species – unless there are specific exemptions or permits.</li> <li>- ID sheet developed and deployed to border staff – Border Force, Portal Inspectors and Plant Health Inspectorate (FS), etc.</li> <li>- Liaison with Wildlife Crime Northern Ireland (PAWNI) to ensure species is not being traded.</li> </ul>



<b>Stakeholder communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to raise public and other stakeholder awareness of non-native invasive plants and provide advice including guidance on control methods and identification information.</li> <li>- Northern Ireland versions of awareness raising campaigns - Check Clean Dry (<a href="http://invasivespeciesireland.com/what-can-i-do/check-clean-dry/">http://invasivespeciesireland.com/what-can-i-do/check-clean-dry/</a>); Be Plant Wise (<a href="http://invasivespeciesireland.com/what-can-i-do/be-plant-wise/">http://invasivespeciesireland.com/what-can-i-do/be-plant-wise/</a>); to alert gardeners and retailers to the threat the species poses.</li> <li>- Traders are not permitted to purchase or sell this species.</li> <li>- Gardeners and land owners must act responsibly and not allow or encourage giant hogweed to spread. Owners should be aware that to consider safely removing and disposing of this plant it is classified as 'controlled waste' &amp; must be removed to a licensed landfill</li> <li>- Guidance is provided in the Horticultural Code of Practice <a href="https://invasivespeciesireland.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Horticulture-Code-Final.pdf">https://invasivespeciesireland.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Horticulture-Code-Final.pdf</a> ;</li> </ul>
<b>Early detection and rapid response</b>	
<b>Surveillance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Species in Northern Ireland should be reported to the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR) through</li> <li>- <a href="http://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI">http://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI</a> or though the Invasive Species Irelands website at <a href="http://invasivespeciesireland.com/report-sighting/">http://invasivespeciesireland.com/report-sighting/</a>.</li> <li>- Wildlife recording apps are available to allow users to report invasive plants sightings.</li> <li>- Government agencies, like the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, DfI Roads/Rivers, AFBI, Forest Service, and Loughs Agency record the presence of non-native invasive species when encountered as part of their work.</li> <li>- Non-government organisations like the National Trust, Ulster Wildlife, and the Rivers and Fishery Trusts, survey their lands and report incidental sightings of non-native invasive species.</li> <li>- All NI Councils to also record and report presence of non-native invasive species on their estates.</li> </ul>
<b>Rapid response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In certain areas of NI a rapid eradication following a confirmed sighting may be appropriate, particularly in cases where it is first discovered in a new catchment. Once widely established sustainable control is extremely difficult.</li> </ul>
<b>Long-term management</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mechanical control – repeated cutting/mowing – needs to be cut below lowest node to stop regrowth. Hand pulling, after it has flowered but before seed heads develop for small infestations.</li> <li>- Mowing and grazing can also be successful in eliminating existing infestations but, to be successful, it would need to be repeated annually and on a catchment scale.</li> <li>- Wherever possible avoid the use of herbicides, especially as this is a riparian species.</li> <li>- If adjacent to water and if herbicides are the only option, they must only be applied by PA6Aw qualified operatives.</li> </ul>	

- Due to the downstream transportation of seeds, control measures in the catchment area of a river must start at the upper reaches and move on downstream.

### **Research**

- CABI was asked by Defra, the Environment Agency and the Scottish Government to find a natural enemy to help control this destructive weed. They have been trialling the rust fungus *Puccinia komarovii* var. *glanduliferae*. since 2006 - <https://himalayanbalsam.cabi.org/scientific-research/>

Photo © Great Britain Non Native Invasive Species Secretariat (GBNNS)



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