

# HIMALAYAN BALSAM

Most people will have seen this plant, with pretty pink flowers, which grows freely along river banks and damp spaces. However, it is in fact a non-native weed, which outcompetes all other vegetation. Because it doesn't have an extensive root system, it erodes perennial plants which wildlife depend on, as well as causing erosion of the river banks and making them vulnerable to flooding.

According to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is 'illegal to plant or allow to grow (Himalayan Balsam) in the wild'.

The plant is in flower now, and it is important to try and get rid of it as soon as possible, because when the flowers turn to seed, they will explode, scattering up to 800 seeds a distance of up to 17m away. This means that not only are our river banks under threat, but our gardens as well. If your garden adjoins the river, you are responsible for the river bank on your side.

It is very easy to get rid of this plant. Just pull it up, snap it, bag it and take it away. Or you can just leave it to die, though it could regenerate a little. It will come up very easily indeed due to its very shallow roots.

Please everyone do your bit to keep our village as free as possible from being overtaken by this extremely invasive species.

