

# Toolbox Talk - Environment

## Himalayan Balsam



### DID YOU KNOW?

Himalayan Balsam is one of the most invasive species in the UK as it dominates habitats, grows densely and shades out native plants.

It 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 seven metres away.

It is often found growing along rivers, disused railway lines or in similar linear corridors

### IDENTIFICATION

- It grows up to 2.5 metres during spring to autumn
- The stem is pink/red, hollow, sappy and brittle. Leaves occur in two's or three's from the same point on the stem. They are spear shaped with serrated edges, shiny and dark green with a reddish mid-rib
- Flowers are purplish pink, carried on long stalks and appear from June to October

### WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

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.

### DO'S & DON'TS

- ✓ Immediately stop any work within seven metres of the suspect plant and report it
- ✗ Hand pull or disturb plants / seedpods
- ✗ Enter an area of Himalayan Balsam during treatment
- ✗ Excavate or move soil that may contain seeds or other plant material without specific instruction
- ✗ Stockpile any material suspected of containing Himalayan Balsam within ten metres of gullies, watercourses or drains



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