Garden balsam
*(Impatiens spp.)*

Originated in central Asia and the Himalaya (Kashmir balsam, Himalayan balsam, small balsam). Also in North America (orange balsam). Introduced as ornamental plants in the 1800s and 1900s.

**Description**
- Annual, herbaceous plants
- Stalks range in length from 30 cm to over 1 metre. Stalks are strong, fluted, hollow and, for *I. glandulifera* and *I. balfouri*, are reddish in colour.
- Single, indented leaves with a stem:
  - opposing or whorled in groups of three for *I. glandulifera*, alternating for *I. capensis* and *I. balfouri*
  - length 2 to 18 cm, width 2 to 7 cm
  - oval, lanceolate blade
- Flowers with a short spur bending down, in clusters of 3 to 14 flowers:
  - purple to white for *I. glandulifera*
  - pink corolla with three lobes and an upper white section for *I. balfouri*
  - pale yellow for *I. parviflora*, orangish for *I. capensis*
- Fruit in the form of thin capsules, 1.5 to 3 cm long, that explode at the slightest touch when ripe
- Small root system, roots break and can be uprooted easily

**Ecology and reproduction**
- Preferred habitat is a cool environment with nutrient-rich soils:
  - riparian zones, rocky river banks, alluvial forests
  - ditches, moist slopes, near rubble and slopes
- The plants can accept considerable shade
- Sexual reproduction through autochorous dispersal of the seeds
- Vegetative multiplication and dissemination by cuttings of stalks and roots for *I. glandulifera*

**Documentation**

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