



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

- Hudin S., Vahrameev P. (coord.) 2010. Guide d'identification des plantes exotiques envahissant les milieux aquatiques et les berges du bassin Loire-Bretagne. Fédération des conservatoires d'espaces naturels, 45 pp.
- Fried G. 2012. Guide des plantes invasives. Belin, Paris, 272 pp.

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Classification

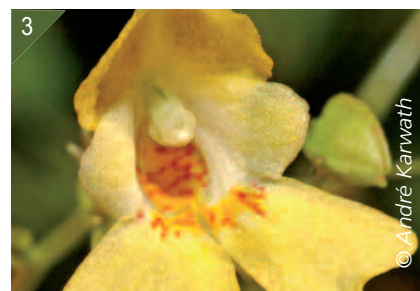
Order	Geraniales
Family	Balsaminaceae
Genus	<i>Impatiens</i> (Linnaeus, 1753)



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1. Kashmir balsam (*Impatiens balfourii*).
2. Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).
- 3- Small balsam (*Impatiens parviflora*).
4. Orange balsam (*Impatiens capensis*).
5. 6. Leaves and fruit of Himalayan balsam.

