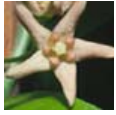




Invasive Plant Atlas of New England

Catalog of Species Search Results



[:: Catalog of Species Search](#)



Impatiens glandulifera

(Ornamental jewelweed
Policeman's helmet
Purple jewelweed
Himalayan balsam)

[Common Name\(s\)](#) | [Full Scientific Name](#) | [Family Name Common](#) | [Family Scientific Name](#) | [Images](#) | [Synonyms](#) | [Description](#) | [Similar Species](#) | [Reproductive/Dispersal Mechanisms](#) | [Distribution](#) | [History of Introduction in New England](#) | [Habitats in New England](#) | [Threats](#) | [Early Warning Notes](#) | [Management Links](#) | [Documentation Needs](#) | [Additional Information](#) | [References](#) | [Data Retrieval](#) | [Maps of New England Plant Distribution](#)

COMMON NAME

Ornamental jewelweed
Policeman's helmet
Purple jewelweed
Himalayan balsam

FULL SCIENTIFIC NAME

Impatiens glandulifera Royle

FAMILY NAME COMMON

Touch-me-not family

FAMILY SCIENTIFIC NAME

Balsaminaceae

IMAGES



Habit



Close-up of
flowers and
fruits



Flower color
morphs



Incursion

Close-up of
seeds

Flower Side View

Close-up of
Glands

NOMENCLATURE/SYNONYMS

Synonyms: *Impatiens roylei* Walp.

DESCRIPTION

Botanical Glossary

Impatiens glandulifera is a coarse, herbaceous annual that can reach 2 m (6.5 ft.) in height. The stems are hexagonally angled. The leaves on the lower part of the plant are usually opposite while the upper leaves are whorled. The leaves are lanceolate to lance-ovate in shape, have acuminate tips, and measure 5-15 cm (2-6 in.) in length. The leaf margins are sharply serrate.

The pink to purplish (sometimes almost white) flowers are usually in groups of 3 and are borne on long peduncled racemes. They are most numerous towards the top of the plant. The flowers are irregular in shape, having broad petals and a saccate lower sepal with a short, recurving spur. These flowers measure 3 cm (1 in.) in length and appear during the summer. The seeds are contained in capsules that measure 1.25-2 cm (0.5-0.75 in.) in length. The seeds are released explosively when the ripened capsule is disturbed or when it dries out.

Page References Bailey 644, Fernald 991, Gleason & Cronquist 362, Holmgren 342, Magee & Ahles 722, Seymour 381. See reference section below for full citations.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Impatiens capensis Meerb. (Orange jewelweed (touch-me-not))

Impatiens pallida Nutt. (Yellow jewelweed (touch-me-not))

Character	<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	<i>Impatiens capensis</i>	<i>Impatiens pallida</i>

Leaf arrangement	Opposite or whorled	Alternate	Alternate
Flower base color	Pink, purple or whitish	Orange	Yellow



Flower of *Impatiens capensis*



Flower of *Impatiens pallida*

REPRODUCTIVE/DISPERSAL MECHANISMS

Impatiens glandulifera is a prolific seed producer. As is typical of the "touch-me-not" family, its seeds are locally dispersed by the ballistic action of its fruit capsules. The seeds can be dispersed further if they reach moving water, which is not uncommon given the plant's preference for moist areas.

DISTRIBUTION

Impatiens glandulifera is native to central Asia, particularly in the Himalayan mountains of India. It is found throughout much of Europe. It has naturalized in California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and also in the northeast and Michigan. In New England it is presently reported from Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Maine.

HISTORY OF INTRODUCTION IN NEW ENGLAND

Impatiens glandulifera was brought to Europe from its native range in the Himalayas in 1835. It was first noted to have naturalized in Europe in 1855. It is presently found in many countries in continental Europe and throughout the UK. Robinson (1908) did not report the presence of *Impatiens glandulifera* in the 7th edition of Gray's Manual of Botany. In the eighth edition of Gray's Manual, Fernald (1950) reported that *Impatiens glandulifera* was "becoming occasionally escaped from cultivation" and was found in Nova Scotia, southern New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and northern New England.

HABITATS IN NEW ENGLAND

Early Successional Forest

Edge
Floodplain Forest
Railroad Right-of-Way
Roadside
Wet Meadow
Yard or Garden

Like other jewelweeds, *Impatiens glandulifera* is found mostly in sites with high soil moisture. It is partially shade tolerant and therefore it can grow in lowland, moist forests. It is commonly found in riparian habitats (along streams) and in roadside ditches.

THREATS

Impatiens glandulifera is unusually tall for an annual plant, has a fast growth rate and the ability to reseed aggressively (each plant can produce about 800 seeds), enabling it to out-compete native vegetation. Its replacement of perennial vegetation on river banks may lead to increased soil erosion. In addition, *Impatiens glandulifera* flowers produce a very rich nectar, which in Europe has been shown to attract pollinators away from native plants, reducing their seed set.

MANAGEMENT LINKS

[Center for Ecology and Hydrology, UK](#)

DOCUMENTATION NEEDS

Documentation required: A specific photograph of the habit or mounted snippet of the flowers.

Best time for documentation: Summer, fall.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Alaska Natural Heritage Program](#)

General description

[Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board](#)

General information (including brief control information)

[Integrated Taxonomic Information System](#)

Taxonomic information about the species

[The PLANTS Database](#)

General information and map

[Washington - King County Noxious Weeds](#)

Descriptive information

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DATA RETRIEVAL

Select a task by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

- Formatted display as table
 Export as comma-delimited text file

MAPS OF PLANT DISTRIBUTION IN NEW ENGLAND

Select a study area by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

- The whole New England area
- One or more states
- One or more counties
- One or more towns (county sub-divisions)

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