Catalog of Species Search Results

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
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.


SIMILAR SPECIES

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th><em>Impatiens glandulifera</em></th>
<th><em>Impatiens capensis</em></th>
<th><em>Impatiens pallida</em></th>
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</table>
### Leaf arrangement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leaf arrangement</th>
<th>Opposite or whorled</th>
<th>Alternate</th>
<th>Alternate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flower base color</strong></td>
<td>Pink, purple or whitish</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
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### 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
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

**REFERENCES**
York.


**DATA RETRIEVAL**

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

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

Submit Selection
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)

Submit Selection