

Dollar Himalayan Balsam Volunteer Group

Date of Campaign: Saturday 11th July – Sunday 19th July

Briefing – 10.00 Saturday 11th July Location: The Hive, Park Place, Dollar (Community Centre)

Project Brief

Himalayan Balsam is a non-native invasive plant which, as the name suggests, originates in the Himalayas and was first identified in the UK in 1855. In the last 20 years we have seen the spread of this plant and the significant erosion of the river banks that have resulted from this spread. This has caused significant changes to the water course and has led to the loss of a substantial amount of farm land and an imbalance in the natural flora of the area.

The objective of this project is to try and eradicate the plant and protect the environment. In doing so we are operating under the guidance of the "Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI). The SISI led by Scottish Natural Heritage and work with the ten regional fisheries trusts.

Meet the plant

Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) is an attractive looking flower, with a stout, hollow stem, trumpet shaped pink/white flowers and elliptical shaped green leaves. It grows in dense stands and can be up to 2m tall. It has an explosive seed capsule, which scatters seeds over a distance of up to 7m.

It grows mostly on river banks and in damp woodlands.

It was introduced into Kew Gardens, and has spread via its seeds – both individuals passing on the seed to others for garden planting and seeds floating down rivers before becoming lodged in soft muddy banks and germinating.



Impacts

Himalayan balsam grows in dense stands and it shades out and crowds out many native species. It produces much nectar and therefore is attractive to pollinating insects, possibly to the detriment of native flowering plants (which are no longer visited by these insects and thus don't get pollinated).

It dominates riverbanks, and in the winter when it dies back its shallow root system is no help in stabilising the bare bank, which is then at risk of erosion. Dense stands

can also impede the water flow at times of high rainfall, increasing the likelihood of flooding.

Hand Pulling

The shallow root system means that Himalayan balsam is very easy to pull out of the soil by hand. This makes it a great activity for schools, groups and volunteers to get stuck into.

The best time for removing Himalayan balsam is the summer, between May – July/Aug. The seeds only persist for around 18 months in the soil, so populations can be eradicated after 2 or 3 years of consistent control.

Location

We have identified the worst affected areas from Vicars bridge west on both sides of the Devon as far as Tait's tomb. We have plotted these sites on a map which will be issued at the briefing. In preparation for volunteer day we have also created composting areas where we would ask the volunteers to deposit the uprooted plants. Left in these contained piles the plants will decompose naturally. These sites are marked on the map and are identified by numbers

Risks associated with the task

- Falling into river
- Stung by wasps or bees
- Stung by nettles or bramble thorns
- Coronavirus

Mitigation of risks

- Pre task briefing where risks will be explained
- Suitable clothing and footwear to be worn. (Long sleeves to prevent nettle stings)
- Gloves should be worn
- Any children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult
- If the plants are too near the water or inaccessible they should be left – Safety first
- Social distancing to be observed at all times and volunteers to stay within their family groups.

What to bring with you

- Gloves
- Suitable footwear – boots or wellies
- Wheel Barrow if you can, making it easier to move the uprooted plants
- Water bottle
- A smile

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