



HIMALAYAN BALSAM

ADVICE NOTE

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Himalayan balsam reproduces via seed. It is unable to vegetatively reproduce via a piece of stem or root tissue. Himalayan balsam is able to quickly colonise an area, densely covering the ground, and out-competing most other vegetation. It is the competitive nature of Himalayan balsam, and its ability to survive in a range of environments, that makes it a successful invader species.

The key objective for controlling Himalayan balsam is to exhaust the plants seed bank in much the same way as you would for controlling Giant hogweed. By preventing Himalayan balsam reaching maturity, you also stop the plant setting seed. The time of each treatment needs to be completed at specific times of the year, and repeated year on year. This will dramatically lower the seed bank.

The typical seed bank longevity within the soil is approximately 2 years. Monitoring should continue for at least 4 years.

Selection of Control Measures

Himalayan Balsam can be controlled in many ways. In summary there are three distinct types of control;

- **Herbicide** – use of pesticides.
- **Cultural** – use of traditional horticultural techniques, cutting, burning, cultivating (generally ineffective).
- **Mechanical** – excavation and removal to landfill, or burial of weed and contaminated material.

Controlling Himalayan balsam requires potential control measures to be evaluated against a given criteria:

- **Environmental impact** – There is an obligation to reduce chemical use. Landfill is a resource that needs to be preserved making excavation and disposal less desirable. Cultural methods of control alone do not serve to eradicate invasive weeds.
- **Cost** – Cultural and mechanical methods can put a burden on the financial and resource cost of any proposed control programme.
- **Target weed situation** – By prioritising key areas and rationalising treatments in less urgent locations a more economic and environmentally focused control programme can be adopted.

In most situations chemical control is found to be the only commercially viable solution, although chemical control of plants within 5 metres of a watercourse should not be carried out without first obtaining written consent from the Environment Agency. Through using PBA Solutions we can provide economical invasive weed control – in full compliance with EA guidelines - throughout England and Wales from our offices in the Midlands, Hampshire, London and Dorset.



For more information call PBA Solutions on 01202 831151, visit: www.pba-solutions.com or email knotweed@pba-solutions.com