

wye valley
Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty

dyffryn gwy
Ardal o Harddwch
Naturiol Eithriadol

Himalayan Balsam Action Toolkit



*Designed by Community Action Groups
for Community Action Groups*

WISP
Wye Invasive Species Project
Prosiect Rhywogaethau Goresgynnol Gwy

Introducing the Balsam Action Toolkit

This Toolkit has been designed to help community groups (new or long-established) negotiate the steps to getting organised and taking action to control Himalayan balsam in your local area.

The Tools in your Toolkit:

1. GET TO KNOW YOUR BALSAM

- **IDENTIFICATION SHEET** - get to know Himalayan Balsam using this GB NNSS guide
- **HIMALAYAN BALSAM LIFECYCLE** - lifecycle stages and when to control it
- **BALSAM AND POLLINATORS LEAFLET** - answers to common questions about Balsam



2. SET UP

- **PRACTICAL GUIDE TO BALSAM BASHING** - advice to help you organise a Balsam work party
- **BALSAM BASH ROUTE MAP** - the key steps in organising a well supported event
- **TAKING ACTION SAFELY GUIDE** - health and safety advice for volunteer groups
- **VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM** - get to know the volunteers in your group
- **GET INVOLVED POSTER** - helping you to recruit new volunteers



3. PLAN EVENT/S

- **LAND/PROPERTY OWNER CONSENT FORM** - gain support and written permission
- **EVENT KIT LIST**, including the essential biosecurity kit
- **BIG BALSAM BASH POSTER TEMPLATES** to help spread the word
- **WELFARE ASSESSMENT** (example plus a blank form you can complete)
- **RISK ASSESSMENT** (example plus a blank form you can complete)



4. AND ACTION!

- **MAPPING BALSAM USING APPS AND MAPS** - note where it's growing locally and share info.
- **VOLUNTEER SIGN-IN SHEET** - ensure you've got emergency contact details
- **PHOTO CONSENT FORM** - so you can feature those photos after your event
- **GIVING 'PERMISSION TO PULL BALSAM'** - poster for owners of land with public access. Just print this poster, fill in the location information, laminate and pin up where it's visible.

We'd love your feedback!

This Toolkit has been created with help from active community groups within the Wye Valley AONB who've been successfully controlling Himalayan balsam. We hope the Toolkit is straightforward to use, but if you have any thoughts about how it could be improved do send your feedback to us via our website.

The Toolkit is available as a set of downloads from our website www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk

This format will enable us to update it as we receive feedback and if and when national guidance changes. If you need a Toolkit printed or in a different language please do get in touch.



GET TO KNOW YOUR BALSAM

- **IDENTIFICATION SHEET**
- **HIMALAYAN BALSAM LIFECYCLE**
- **BALSAM AND POLLINATORS LEAFLET**

Species Description

Scientific name: *Impatiens glandulifera*

AKA: Policeman's Helmet, Indian Balsam, Jac y Neidiwr (Welsh)

Native to: West and central Himalayas

Habitat: Found mostly on river banks and in damp woodland, can grow in other damp habitat

A tall, attractive, annual herb with explosive seed heads. Although easy to identify as a mature plant with its pink-purple flowers, fleshy stem and characteristic leaves, the seedlings and last year's dead stems of this annual are more difficult to spot.

Introduced as a garden plant in the early 19th century and first recorded in the wild in 1855. Often favoured by the general public for its aesthetic appeal and is still deliberately planted on occasion. Now widespread in the UK, especially along urban rivers. Spreads solely by seeds, which are small and easily carried by wind or water.

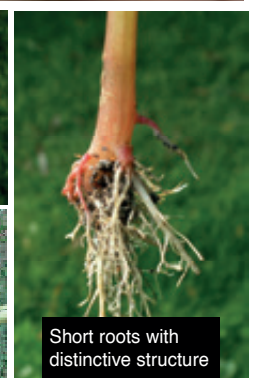
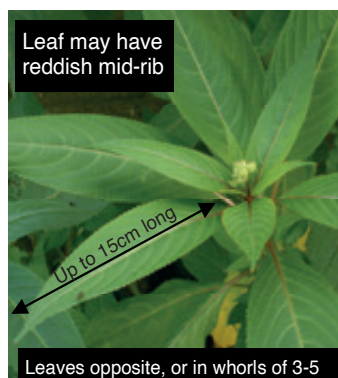
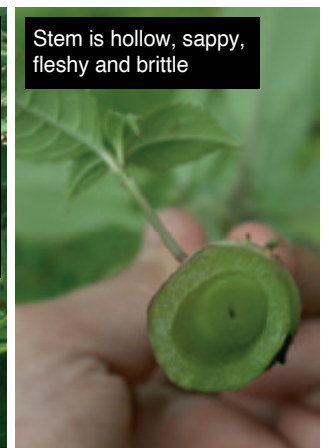
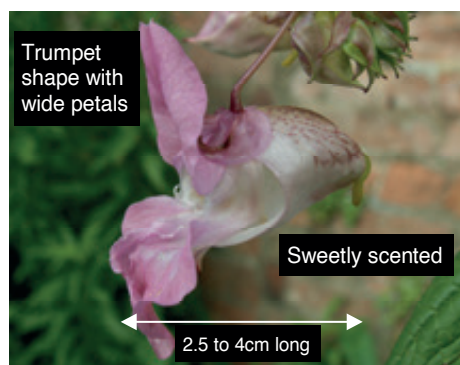
Out-competes native species in ecologically sensitive areas, particularly river banks. Where it grows in dense stands along river banks it can impede flow at times of high rainfall, increasing the likelihood of flooding. Die back of extensive stands over winter can leave river banks bare and exposed to erosion.

Himalayan balsam is listed under Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to England and Wales. As such, it is an offence to plant or otherwise allow this species to grow in the wild.

For details of legislation go to www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation.



Key ID Features



Identification throughout the year

Can be identified at most times of the year: March-June by its seedlings, stem and leaf shape, from July to September by its stem, leaf shape and flowers. More difficult to identify over winter (October to February), look for hay like remains and distinctive root structure.



Hay like remains in winter



Root structure in winter

Similar Species

Orange Balsam
Non-Native
(*Impatiens capensis*)



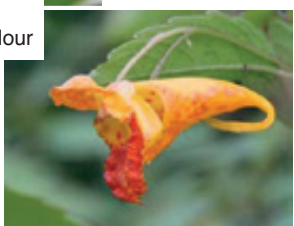
Smaller leaves, with fewer serrations

Flowers slightly earlier, June to August

Orange balsam is much less aggressive than Himalayan balsam, forming smaller less dense stands

Flower is similar in shape but orange in colour

Smaller than Himalayan balsam, growing to a height of 1.2m



Distribution

Widespread and common across the whole of the UK. Primarily on riverbanks and in other damp areas.

Source: NBN Gateway. Check website for current distribution



References and further reading:
Blamey, M, Fitter, R and Fitter, A (2003) "The Wild Flowers of Britain and Ireland. The Complete Guide to the British and Irish Flora". A & C Black
Preston, C D, Pearman, D A and Dines, T A (editors) (2002) "New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora". Oxford University Press
Stace, C (1999) "Field Flora of the British Isles". Cambridge University Press

Himalayan Balsam

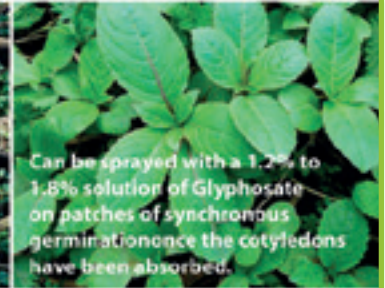
Impatiens Glandulifera

Consider the life cycle for cost effective control

Germination and growth

Feb-Mar-Apr

Dormancy is broken after a chilling period over 45 days at 4°C.



Growth, pollination and fertilization



May-Jun-Jul

Hand pull early May - there after every 3 weeks on the same patch until early November due to delayed germination. Start on the highest patch upstream or on highest patch up slope.

Flowering, fruiting, ripening and seed set

Aug-Sep-Oct

Do not spray when in flower due to pollinators.



Dormant



Nov-Dec-Jan

Dormant seeds are normally viable for one year and at most two years.

Control methods



From June through to October, the pretty flowers of Himalayan balsam provide a glut of nectar that honey bees and some bumblebees find irresistible. So it's understandable that some people question the desire to remove Himalayan balsam from our landscape and ask 'is it really that bad?'. But, the stark fact remains, Himalayan balsam is an Invasive Non-Native Species and a transformer that is altering large areas of our lowland ecosystems at high cost to our economy and wildlife. Due to its highly invasive nature, leaving a little balsam for the bees is neither realistic nor practical. This is a plant on the march and only regular, active management stops it spreading out of control.

Although the flowers might appear popular with insects, due to its flower morphology, Himalayan balsam only supplies nectar to a select few species: larger bees with middle sized or long tongues such as *Bombus*, *Apis* and *Vespa*. The myriad of other pollinators, including butterflies, moths and beetles, are losing out and a UK study has shown that once balsam establishes in an area, the numbers of spider species declines by 75%, beetle species by 64% and true bug species by 58%¹.

The honey bee has existed in the UK for over 4,000 years, supported over that time by an abundance and diversity of native flowering plants. Sadly, this diversity of plant life is disappearing, in part due to the spread of Himalayan balsam and other invasive species. Replacing balsam with a range of native plants and trees will provide a diverse source of nectar and pollen throughout the seasons that not only support honey bees and bumblebees, but the many vital pollinating insects.

¹ Tanner R. et al (2013) PLoS ONE Impacts of an Invasive Non-Native Annual Weed, *Impatiens glandulifera*, on Above- and Below-ground Invertebrate Communities in the United Kingdom.

Here are some of the native flowering plants and trees that provide a diverse source of nectar and pollen through the seasons:



Apple blossom



Betony



Birds-foot-trefoil



Bluebell



Comfrey



Foxglove



Honeysuckle



Knapweed



Oxeye daisy



Purple loosestrife



Pussy willow



Ragged Robin



Red dead-nettle



Scabious



Stinking hellebore



White clover



Wood anemone



Yarrow

Photographs © Andy Karran, Ellie Baggett

Himalayan balsam and foraging

Himalayan balsam is an edible plant and in its native Himalayan region, where the plant is not invasive, it is traditionally used in curries.

Thankfully, there's little appetite for exploring its culinary uses here in the UK where wild foraging for Himalayan balsam can constitute an offence. This invasive plant is classified as 'controlled waste' under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, which means any part of the plant and associated material e.g. soil, must not be removed from its site of origin other than to a controlled waste facility.

Himalayan balsam and gardening

Himalayan balsam is also listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which means 'it is an offence to plant or cause it to grow in the wild'.

Currently, the law does not require you to remove balsam from your garden but you can be held liable and face penalties if your balsam is allowed to jump your garden wall or flow downstream to colonise your neighbour's property. Considering the ease with which it can spread, the risk of harbouring this plant, even if you're 'doing it for the bees', is simply not worth it. Please be aware that sharing balsam plants and seeds with others is illegal.

The variety of flowering plants and trees in our gardens acts as both a magnet and a lifeline for many bees and insects. Indeed, some species of bumblebee are now more common in gardens than in the countryside! So, if you see Himalayan balsam in your garden, do try to control it promptly when the cost, to wildlife and your pocket, will be low. Ignore it and the costs will rocket.

Here are a few gardening tips to encourage pollinators to your garden...

- Join Plantlife's 'No Mow May' – let your lawn grass grow and be amazed at the number of flowers that appear and pollinators that visit them. www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/no-mow-may
- Let the dandelions flower – they are a superb source of early nectar and they flower for months....and they really are beautiful little plants.
- In the garden centre choose plants that have the pollinator-friendly labels.
- Avoid the double plant varieties as these don't produce nectar.
- Build a woodpile in a quiet corner with twigs and leaf mulch – these provide habitats for hibernating bees and other insects.
- Leave earth banks and old walls alone as they make great nesting habitats for bumblebees.
- Plant fruit trees like apple, crab apple and plum which flower in early spring
- Plant fruit bushes such as gooseberry, raspberries and blackcurrants which flower in late spring
- Plant herbs such as thyme, fennel, feverfew, borage and comfrey.





SET UP

- **PRACTICAL GUIDE TO BALSAM BASHING**
- **BALSAM BASH ROUTE MAP**
- **TAKING ACTION SAFELY GUIDE**
- **VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM**
- **GET INVOLVED POSTER**

Practical Guide to Himalayan Balsam Bashing 1 of 4

Is this plant really a problem?

Yes. Himalayan balsam is an Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS), now widespread across the UK's lowlands and regarded in many countries as a pest species. Natural Resources Wales list it in their 'top ten most destructive and costly invasive species' list.

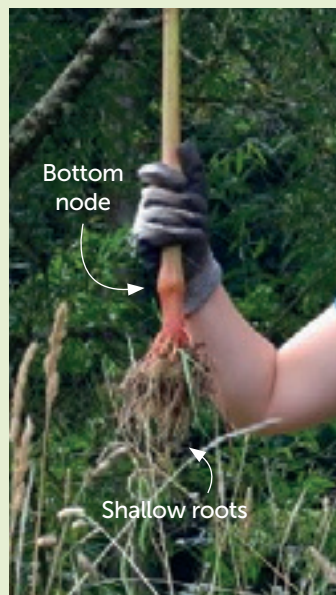
This INNS was introduced to the UK in 1839 and it spread by seeds being shared by the gardening and beekeeping community and via watercourses where seeds germinated in the muddy banks. A relative of the Busy Lizzie, this is our tallest annual plant, growing 2-3 metres high, with masses of sweet smelling pink flowers. It has the highest growth rate of any plant in the herb layer, easily out-growing native species to dominate an area in just one season. With the first autumn frosts the balsam dies back, leaving bare earth banks that are more erosion-prone, leading to habitat loss and the smothering of aquatic life. This plant grows happily in a range of conditions, but it really loves the moist, semi-shaded conditions found alongside watercourses and in damp woodlands. So, the River Wye's streams, wetlands and woodlands provide a perfect home!

Under the Countryside & Wildlife Act it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause Himalayan balsam to grow in the wild. The seeds are classed as a controlled waste.

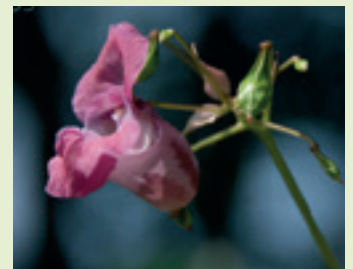
How to recognise Himalayan balsam



Tall, reddish stems and masses of pink flowers



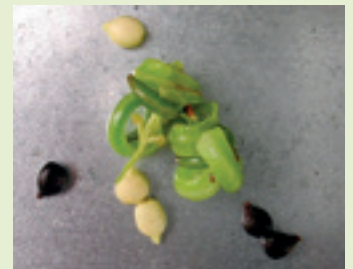
Seedlings



Flower and pod



Pointed leaves, 3 in a whorl



Seed pod, ripe (black) and unripe (white) seeds

How is it so successful?

- Himalayan balsam has a long flowering season (June – October) and pollinators often favour balsam flowers over native flowering plants. Seeds are produced from July through to October.
- When touched, the seeds pods explode open, firing seeds up to seven metres in all directions! Each plant produces between 600 and 2,500 seeds, which are easily transported by water, by humans and wildlife.
- Seeds can survive for 2 years in the soil until the right conditions stimulate growth.
- Germination can occur on mass (synchronous), and it can be staggered over months (February – July).
- Balsam seedlings quickly outgrow and shade other plants which die from a lack of sunshine.
- Studies show Himalayan balsam may deplete soil mycorrhizae, preventing the regrowth of native plants.
- Predictions say climate change will bring more rainfall and floods, which will suit Himalayan balsam.

We can't afford to ignore it.

Fortunately Himalayan balsam is easy to pull up by the roots with a satisfying tug, and its seeds are only viable for around 2 years. So regular balsam bashing can halt its spread. If you spot Himalayan balsam in your garden or land, along a Public Right of Way or verge, do pull it up (as long as conditions are safe for you to do so) – see our tips below.

A community spirit will be the key to getting rid of this pest plant.









If you see it growing in a neighbour's garden, gently point it out to them, explain the issues and offer to help them control it. If you know a local landowner who's struggling with controlling it, mobilise your friends and neighbours to help them. If you fancy bringing together your neighbours to balsam-bash along your local footpaths, bridleways or at a local site, then do get in touch with us. We can help your new group get up and running and ...

...do have a look at our *Balsam Action Toolkit*, designed for (and by) community action groups.



Available to download from www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk or contact us to request a hard copy

Organising a Balsam Bashing Work Party

- 
Choose a site where action will make a difference - see next page. Get the landowner's support (have a look at the consent form sample within the Toolkit) and make sure the balsam can be accessed safely.
- 
Complete your Risk Assessment (RA) - ensure you've identified the hazards and how these can be controlled - a RA example is provided in our Toolkit.
- 
Set the date and spread the word - use posters (see example in the Toolkit) and social media to promote the work party. Invite your friends and neighbours and reach out to groups who might be interested e.g. WI, youth groups, transition groups.
- 
Plan your day - ensure you have the necessary tools, refreshments and treats and your biosecurity kit- see the kit list in our Toolkit. Don't over-work your volunteers; you want to make sure they'll join you again in future!
- 
On the day, lead your team - set out the structure of the day and communicate why balsam control is vital for wildlife. Let everyone know when to expect refreshment breaks. Run through your RA, highlighting the risks. If any tools are to be used explain their safe use and demonstrate the task (see below).
- 
Record your activities- Take before and after photos (a photo consent form example is included in the Toolkit) and record how much you've achieved. List any lessons learned to help improve future events. And do share your photos and news with us!
- 
Follow biosecurity! When you leave the site make sure everyone follows the biosecurity procedure (see below).
- 
Care for your volunteers - Thank everyone for their efforts and promote future work parties. If you can, celebrate achievements with social events, e.g. a barbecue.

'Balsam bashing' is the practice of manually pulling up balsam plants with roots, and/or cutting plants below the bottom node using scythes, slashers, brush-cutters or flails, to stop the plants forming seeds.

Top Tips for successful Balsam Bashing

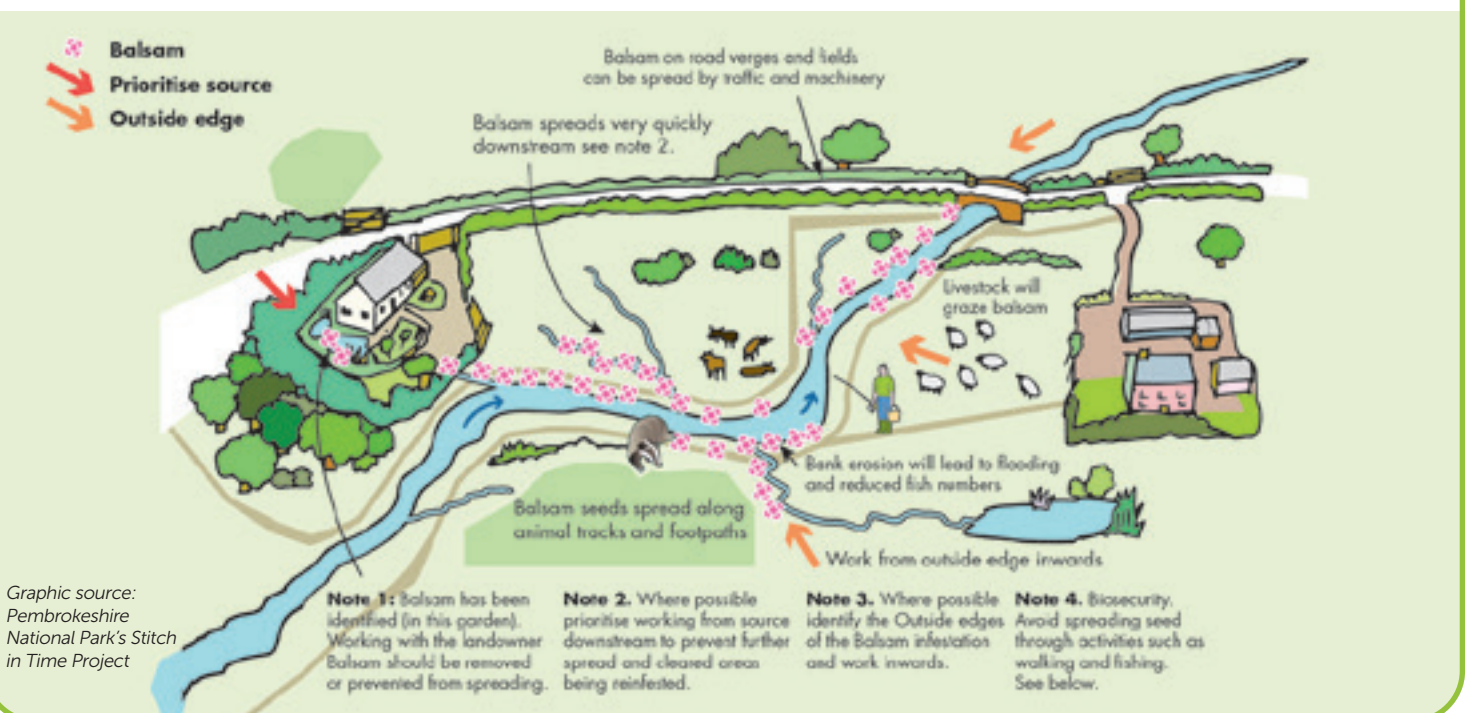
- ✓ Look around your local area and try to identify the source of balsam seed (likely to be the highest point upstream or highest point uphill) – see the diagram below.
- ✓ What3Words, the mobile phone app, is a useful tool to record sites (and do share those with us).
- ✓ Manual pulling is best carried out before the flowers appear (May) or at early flowering (June).
- ✓ If pulling during early flowering, first gently bend the flower and seed heads into a sturdy plastic bag and break them off into the bag. Keep bagged flowers and seeds on site to rot down for at least 3 years. It is illegal to take them off site except to a licensed controlled waste facility.
- ✓ The roots are rarely more than a few centimeters deep. Grasp the stem and lift the roots out with a gentle tug. If the stem snaps above the bottom node try again!
- ✓ Snap the stem of the pulled up plant between the root and the bottom node.
- ✓ If the site is large and too daunting for manual control use a slasher, scythe, flail or brushcutter, but cut below the bottom node to stop the plant

reshooting (if cut above the bottom node, plants go into overdrive, re-grow and produce lots of seed). Even one low cut in the first season will greatly reduce seed production, giving you a little time to plan how to deal with the area.

- ✓ Leave pulled plants piled up on the ground to rot down. However, if the site is damp the balsam might re-root from multiple nodes, so hang the plants over rocks or branches so they do dry out. Make sure the piles are well away from watercourses to prevent blocking. Check the piles after a couple of weeks to ensure no plants are rooting or flowering.
- ✓ Follow up work will be needed as the increase in sunshine can stimulate seedlings to sprout.
- ✓ Repeated monthly balsam bashing brings rapid success.



Identifying the paths of spread is critical



Graphic source: Pembrokeshire National Park's Stitch in Time Project

Communities up and down the Wye Valley are taking action.

Will you join them?

Pulling or cutting one balsam plant before it flowers will reduce the seed-bank in the soil by 600 to 2,500 seeds. So, it really is the case that every little helps.

Fed up with seeing this pest plant expanding its range every summer, more and more local communities are taking action. Here are a few Wye Valley examples:

Taking a catchment approach: over 3 years, The North & District Footpath Group has mapped and methodically balsam-bashed across the Manor Brook catchment that feeds into the River Wye at Whitebrook. Areas that had become infested by balsam are once again havens for a diversity of wildlife, proving that this community-led catchment approach really does work.

Saving important habitats: over 4 days in 2021 Brockweir community (and neighbours) came together to stop the march of balsam through species rich meadows and woodlands, and to reclaim their stretch of the River Wye for wildlife. More than 3km of balsam was cleared. Plans are afoot to revisit those sites and extend work to new sites in the upper catchment.

Reclaiming valuable amenity areas: Upstream from the Wye Valley AONB, St James and Bartonsham Community Association have been working to raise awareness and increase levels of engagement along Hereford's riverbank, beginning with Bishop's Meadow and working upstream, while supporting Friends of Bartonsham Meadows in tackling the balsam in Bartonsham Meadows, floodplain meadows to the east of Hereford, where the Wye meanders between Victorian and Canary Bridges.

Supporting local landowners and residents:

Llandogo Balsam Bashers plan to pull up balsam around their beautiful valleyside village, working from the most uphill infestations down towards the River Wye. They will be helping residents and landowners clear gardens, paths and fields of this pest.

If you'd like support in setting up a local action group or just organising a one-off balsam bash, do visit our website to download our Balsam Action Toolkit (written for (and by) local action groups) and please do get in touch to tell us what you're planning via www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk



Community-led balsam bashing at Brockweir

Good biosecurity will ensure you don't become a spreader!

To ensure we're not personally contributing to the problem while we're enjoying the countryside, remember the mantra 'Check, Clean, Dry':

CHECK

Check your equipment, shoes and clothing for mud, aquatic animals or plant seeds and material. Remove anything you find and leave it at the site. A small brush, or better yet, a hoof pick is great for brushing off balsam seeds from shoes or tyre treads before moving into a non-infested area.

CLEAN

Clean everything thoroughly as soon as you can paying attention to areas that are damp or hard to access. Use hot water if you can.

DRY

Dry everything for as long as you can before using elsewhere as some invasive plants and animals can survive for over two weeks in damp conditions.

This guide forms part of the Balsam Action Toolkit created by the Wye Valley AONB Unit's Wye Invasive Species Project (WISP). Support has come from The North & District Footpath Group, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Wales Resilient Ecological Network (WaREN) and GB Non-Native Species Secretariat. The Wye Valley AONB unit has received funding for support for invasive species control through Severn Trent's *Boost for Biodiversity Fund*, National Heritage Lottery's *Nature Networks Fund* and Natural Resources Wales *Biodiversity and Ecosystems Resilience Fund*.

Balsam Bash Route Map

This is the ideal scenario, so please don't worry if you can't complete all steps in time. With each plant pulled up you're stopping thousands more balsam plants from germinating, so it's more important to do what you can.

FEBRUARY

Start calls to action

1. Check in with your volunteers
2. Invite new recruits, use social media, community notice boards, email etc.

Do check out the full Balsam Action Toolkit, which contains helpful tools like the landowner consent form, risk assessment, kit list, posters, volunteer sign-in sheets.

MARCH

Choose a site

1. Contact the landowner and offer your group's support
 2. Obtain written consent to access their land to carry out balsam control
 3. Keep the landowner updated and supportive
 4. Check your site for protected designations e.g. SSSI or Nature Reserve and gain necessary permissions
- Visit <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/> for help with this

EARLY
APRIL

Plan your events

1. Check you have the right tools and kit (inc. Biosecurity and First Aid kit)
2. Check your volunteers are keen, willing and able
3. Check the logistics refreshments, travel long range weather forecast
4. Link to other environmental issues e.g. plastics, climate change

Sort your admin

1. Update First Aid cover (if necessary)
2. Complete all safety assessments
3. Confirm dates, times and locations with your group

EARLY
MAY

MID-LATE
MAY
(and repeat monthly for greatest effect)

Big Balsam Bash!

1. Introduce yourself, set out the structure of the day, communicate why balsam control is vital for wildlife
2. Let everyone know when to expect refreshment breaks
3. Run through the Risk Assessment. If using tools, introduce the safety aspects
4. Record your activities photos, videos (make sure you have your volunteer's consent)
5. Follow Biosecurity procedure when everyone leaves the site
6. Thank everyone for their efforts
7. Promote future Big Balsam Bash events
8. Celebrate with a social event e.g BBQ
9. Share your successes and lessons learned with other groups

Spread the word!

1. Use posters, flyers, social media to promote your event
2. Invite friends, family, neighbours
3. Reach out to other community groups (W1, DofE, Rotary, youth groups, Transition groups)

Taking Action Safely

For Local Action Groups

Health & safety, welfare and insurance is, for most, the less fun side of volunteering, but it really is a must to invest some time addressing these aspects before getting stuck into the practical outdoor work.

The Government's Health & Safety Executive (HSE) says:

If you carry out volunteering, either as an individual or as part of a community group that has no employees then health and safety law will not normally apply to you. However, you should still carry out your role safely and follow any local government guidelines. For example, a community group of volunteers on a [Himalayan balsam pulling and] litter-picking exercise should check with their local authority if there are any restrictions, such as avoiding public highways.

Under the common law, voluntary organisations and individual volunteers have a duty of care to each other and others who may be affected by their activities. In some cases, people may sue you for damages using the civil law if they are injured as a result of negligence, for example a volunteer injuring a passer-by with a falling branch while carrying out tree maintenance.

Health & Safety

Like many outdoor conservation activities, Himalayan balsam tasks can sometimes take you off the beaten track where the risk of an accident might be raised. With common law duty of care comes the responsibility to understand and communicate the health and safety aspects associated with your tasks. This Balsam Action Toolkit provides some forms to help you with this:

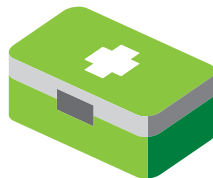
A Risk Assessment Form

Help with identifying the hazards and risks associated with balsam tasks, and the measures to minimise risks and deal with emergencies. A completed example risk assessment is provided together with a blank working form that you're welcome to use.

A Welfare Assessment Form

Help with addressing welfare aspects e.g. where to wash hands or go to the toilet during tasks. A completed example welfare assessment is provided together with a blank working form that you're welcome to use.

For safety, we recommend that at least one or more members of your group holds a relevant, up-to-date First Aid qualification.



Your local authority Volunteer Coordinator might be able to assist you with the training or the costs towards the training. Do get in touch with us and we can point you in their direction.

There's also a useful Kit List provided in the Balsam Action Toolkit to help you assemble everything you and your group might need for a successful and safe Balsam Bashing event.

Public Liability Insurance

There's no law that says you must buy insurance for a voluntary or community event, but it is generally regarded as good practice and you might want to make sure you and your group is covered in case something goes wrong i.e. someone makes a claim for an injury sustained while volunteering with you.

The HSE says:

Sometimes another body, perhaps a local council you have contact with or someone that you contract with (such as a landowner if the event is taking place on their land), will require you to have public liability insurance. If this is the case, you can ask why they are requiring this because it is not compulsory in law. Sometimes signing a disclaimer will be adequate instead of buying insurance.

If you are hiring equipment check with the company you are hiring it from whether their terms of hire include insurance and read any conditions carefully (particularly any exclusions). If external businesses are providing services, such as food, you should check they have their own insurance, and that it is in force on the day of the event.

If you feel it best to have Public Liability Insurance, there are two avenues you can explore:

1) Teaming up with existing local groups or your community/parish council

See if there are any local volunteer bureaux, community interest companies (CIC) or charities, local conservation or clean up groups, who might already have insurance cover for volunteer work. Ask if you could team up with them and be covered under their policy.

Some community / parish councils provide insurance for local volunteer footpath wardens, and they might be able to add your group to that policy if you help with some path maintenance, for example balsam pulling along local Public Rights of Way. Your county council Volunteer Officer might also be able to help you with this aspect, so do get in touch with us and we can point you in their direction.

2) Taking out insurance for your own group

Here are two examples of organisations providing insurance for outdoor volunteer work:

- The Conservation Volunteers: If you are a member of the TCV's Community Network (it's easy to join and there are superb conservation resources you can then tap into) you can benefit from discounted insurance underwritten by Zurich. You will need to quote your TCV membership number when you call Zurich to get a quote. Otherwise Zurich offer an online package of insurance from £96 a year, but member discounts are not available for this package. It includes public liability, personal accident, employer liability, contents cover etc.
- Keep Wales Tidy: KWT runs a Community Group Insurance Scheme, which provides free basic insurance cover to groups formed and constituted in the last 12 months. For groups who have been in existence for longer than 12 months, KWT is asking for a contribution of £50/£35 towards the cost of the basic cover. They will be keen to see your group litter picking alongside your core conservation tasks.

We welcome your feedback!

We'd be interested to hear your experience with volunteer group health and safety and insurance matters so please do get in touch with us via our website Contact Us page www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk

www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/volunteers/volunteer-health-and-safety.htm

www.gov.uk/government/publications/can-do-guide-for-organisers-of-voluntary-events/the-can-do-guide-to-organising-and-running-voluntary-and-community-events#part-6-do-i-need-insurance

Volunteer Registration Form

For Local Action Groups

LOCAL ACTION GROUP NAME:

PART 1: PERSONAL DETAILS

FULL NAME: TITLE:

ADDRESS:

..... POST CODE:

MOBILE TELEPHONE: DAYTIME TELEPHONE:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

OCCUPATION: DATE OF BIRTH:

To help us consider any appropriate adjustments required and to better support you, please give brief details of any disabilities or health concerns we need to know about, so we can discuss this with you.

PART 2: ABOUT YOU

Background & Interests:
Please give brief details. This can include your skills and experience, hobbies, interests and previous volunteering roles.

Why do you want to volunteer with this group, and what do you hope to gain from it?

PART 3: EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

NAME: RELATIONSHIP TO YOU:

ADDRESS:

..... CONTACT NUMBER:

PART 4: DATA PROTECTION

The information that you have provided is required to administer your interest in volunteering with this local action group. It will be held securely on a volunteer database and in line with Data Protection Legislation.

Please tick the boxes if you are happy for the local action group to contact you:

By Email By Phone By Post

I declare that the information I have given is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, true and complete.

SIGNED: DATE:

Fancy getting outside, making a difference for wildlife and making new friends?

Your local volunteer action group needs your help to get rid of Himalayan balsam around our beautiful local area.

Himalayan balsam is an invasive non-native species that can smother our native plants, take over sensitive habitats and force out local wildlife.

We are looking for volunteers to help us control this harmful species. So, if you have a couple of hours to spare and want to do something to help your local area, then please do get in touch.

Full training in mapping and balsam pulling can be provided.

To register as a volunteer:

Call:

On:

Email:

Or find us on Facebook:





PLAN EVENT/S

- LAND/PROPERTY OWNER CONSENT FORM
- EVENT KIT LIST
- BIG BALSAM BASH POSTER TEMPLATES
- WELFARE ASSESSMENT
- RISK ASSESSMENT

Land/Property Owner Consent Form

For Local Action Groups

Agreement for Access and Control of Himalayan balsam

PART 1: LAND/PROPERTY OWNER DETAILS

FULL NAME:..... TITLE:

ADDRESS:.....

..... POST CODE:

MOBILE TELEPHONE: DAYTIME TELEPHONE:

EMAIL ADDRESS:.....

PART 2: TENANT DETAILS (IF APPLICABLE)

FULL NAME:..... TITLE:

ADDRESS:.....

..... POST CODE:

CONTACT NUMBER: EMAIL ADDRESS:

PART 3: HIMALAYAN BALSAM SITE/S DETAILS

SITE ADDRESS:

PLEASE DESCRIBE THE SITE:

Have you, your contractor or Local Action Group volunteers treated or managed the site before?

Yes No Unsure

Please give details (date/who involved/method of treatment):

PART 4: YOUR CONSENT

GDPR Policy - Your contact details will be kept solely for use by the local action group coordinator in order to contact you in relation to the treatment of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) on your land/property. Unless you indicate below, when this work finishes all contact details held for you will be deleted. They will never be shared with any third parties without your consent.

As the land/property owner on title, by choosing 'Yes', I agree to:

- Allowing the Local Action Group coordinator to hold my contact details as per the GDPR policy above.
- Allow the Local Action Group volunteers to work on the area of my land where the Himalayan balsam is growing at agreed dates and times.

SIGNED:..... DATE:.....

BIG BALSAM BASH

Kit List



Review your equipment list before your event to make sure that you have everything you need.

Don't forget your biosecurity kit and biscuits for your attendees!

Kit check-list

EQUIPMENT

- ✓ First aid kit
- ✓ Gloves for all attendees
- ✓ Alcohol/Hand gel wipes
- ✓ Refreshments
- ✓ Biosecurity kit





PAPERWORK

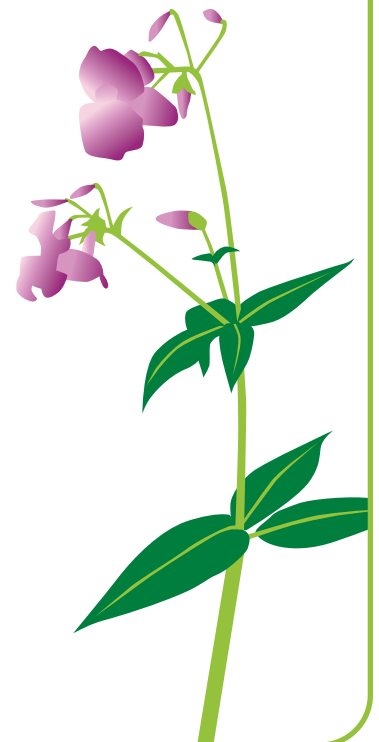
- ✓ Copy of Risk Assessment
- ✓ Volunteer Sign-In Sheet
- ✓ Volunteer Registration Forms
- ✓ Photo Consent Forms
- ✓ Copy of Welfare Assessment

Do make sure to include a basic biosecurity kit!

BIOSECURITY KIT

The following are cheap and easily obtained items to include in your biosecurity kit:

-  **Hoof pick** – to remove seeds and plant fragments which imbed themselves in boot treads and tyres.
-  **Long handled brush** – to scrub equipment
-  **Water container** - or a large re-used water bottle, for washing equipment
-  **Flexible bucket** - big enough to fit your boot and a few inches of water inside





Big

Balsam Bash

Join the Fight Against This Invasive Plant!

Himalayan Balsam is an Invasive Non-Native Species and a pest plant. It is present in this area and likely to spread, finding niches away from the River Wye, in gardens, woodlands, orchards, along our paths and bridleways. It smothers native plants, alters natural habitats, forces out local wildlife and impacts on our own enjoyment of the countryside.

Help us to stop the spread by joining our Big Balsam Bash! Everyone is welcome.



Group Name:

Date/Time:

Meeting Point:

What to bring: Please wear protective clothing i.e. trousers, long sleeved tops and gardening gloves as you may be working amongst nettles or brambles. The terrain might be rough and uneven so do wear sturdy shoes. You may also wish to bring a bottle of water, light refreshments and sun cream.

For more information visit/call:

Please do spread the word about stopping the spread!



Big Balsam Bash

Join the Fight Against This Invasive Plant!

Himalayan Balsam is an Invasive Non-Native Species and a pest plant. It is present in this area and likely to spread, finding niches away from the River Wye, in gardens, woodlands, orchards, along our paths and bridleways. It smothers native plants, alters natural habitats, forces out local wildlife and impacts on our own enjoyment of the countryside.

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For more information visit/call:

Please do spread the word about stopping the spread!

Welfare Assessment Form Example for Local Action Groups

ACTIVITY TYPE:	Short duration works to carry out invasive non-native species (INNS) management – Himalayan Balsam survey, hand-pulling, some vegetation clearance to access INNS.				
VOLUNTEER GROUP:		LANDOWNER/AGENT NAME:			
SITE/S NAME:		FOREST WORKS MANAGER:			
SITE/S GRID REFERENCE:		OPERATION TYPE:	INNS management – Himalayan Balsam Survey and removal by hand pulling		
SITE/S WHAT3WORDS ADDRESS:		EXPECTED OPERATOR DAYS:			
PRIMARY WELFARE USER:	Volunteers	SAFE LOCATION FOR WELFARE AND MAINTENANCE OF FACILITIES: E.g. flat, off-road location, large enough for unit. (Tick relevant box)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Comments: Work is reactive, highly mobile and undertaken on foot from home. A welfare unit is not practical and facilities are not required on site except those detailed below.
WELFARE PROVIDER(S):	Volunteers	SAFE SITE ACCESS RISK: (Tick relevant box)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Comments: Work is reactive, highly mobile and undertaken on foot from home. Sites can be restrictive in size and access, but volunteers only allowed on sites where access is assessed to be safe by supervisor.
ENVIRONMENTAL RISK: (Tick relevant box)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments: Terrain can be steep, slippery and overgrown with thorny plants. See Risk Assessment for further information.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Comments: Rural areas of lower Wye Valley have a high vandalism and theft risk, however nothing will be left on site/s and volunteers will operate buddy system to ensure personal safety.
WELFARE FACILITIES REQUIRED: (Tick relevant box)	Flushing Toilet:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Changing Area	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (give details)
	Hand Washing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rest Area	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Drinking Water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Shower	<input type="checkbox"/>	
JUSTIFICATION FOR ANY LOWER LEVEL OF PROVISION	<p>Considering above factors, in particular the short duration and multiple locations of the works and the limited number of volunteer on site, table 2 Welfare Standards are acceptable. Volunteers will be making one-off short duration visits on foot to multiple locations starting and finishing from home where full welfare facilities are available.</p> <p>Gloves and hand cleansing facilities will be available on site. Bottled, safe and wholesome drinking water will be carried and available at all times.</p> <p>Covid-19 guidance will be followed at all times.</p> <p>The work is dictated by the weather and the lifecycle of the INNS, which ensures that volunteers will be working in dry, calm conditions with no risk of exposure to wintry conditions.</p>				

Welfare Assessment Form for Local Action Groups

ACTIVITY TYPE:					
VOLUNTEER GROUP:			LANDOWNER/AGENT NAME:		
SITE/S NAME:			FOREST WORKS MANAGER:		
SITE/S GRID REFERENCE:			OPERATION TYPE:		
SITE/S WHAT3WORDS ADDRESS:			EXPECTED OPERATOR DAYS:		
PRIMARY WELFARE USER:			SAFE LOCATION FOR WELFARE AND MAINTENANCE OF FACILITIES: E.g. flat, off-road location, large enough for unit. (Tick relevant box)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WELFARE PROVIDER(S):			SAFE SITE ACCESS RISK: (Tick relevant box)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ENVIRONMENTAL RISK: (Tick relevant box)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SITE SECURITY RISK: (Tick relevant box)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WELFARE FACILITIES REQUIRED: (Tick relevant box)	Flushing Toilet:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Changing Area	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (give details)
	Hand Washing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rest Area	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Drinking Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shower	<input type="checkbox"/>	
JUSTIFICATION FOR ANY LOWER LEVEL OF PROVISION					

Risk Assessment Form For Local Action Groups Example

GROUP NAME: *The Brilliant Balsam Bashers*

OUTDOOR EVENT: *Spring Balsam Bashing Work Party*

DATE: *22 May 2022* LOCATION: *Beautiful Woods SSSI*

SITE ENTRY Grid Ref: *SO 000 0000* SITE ENTRY W3W Address: *made.up.address*

EVENT ACTIVITY: *Survey, Pulling, Cutting Himalayan Balsam*

NO. OF VOLUNTEERS: *Max. 20*

ASSESSOR (print): *Daisy Smith*

DATE: *20 April 2022* SIGNATURE:

ASSESSMENT DISCUSSED AND AGREED WITH EVENT ORGANISER:

COORDINATOR NAME (print):

AGREEMENT DATE: COORDINATOR SIGNATURE:

Assessment Review Dates (annually/change occurs):

DATE: BY WHOM:

DATE: BY WHOM:

DATE: BY WHOM:

Risk Rating:

HAZARD (Severity)	VALUE	RISK (Likelihood)
Negligible	1	Unlikely
Slight	2	Possible
Moderate	3	Quite Possible
Severe	4	Likely
Very Severe	5	Very Likely

Hazard Value x Risk Value = Risk Level

Ranking of Risk (Risk Level)

1 - 4	1	Low Risk
5 - 15	2	Medium Risk
16 - 25	3	High Risk

Low Risk: Risk can be acceptable.

Medium Risk: Acceptable with adequate control measures in place.

High Risk: Action MUST be prioritised and timetabled to reduce risk to an acceptable level.

Risk Assessment Form For Local Action Groups Example

Hazard and Risk Identification

SHEET No: 1 of 3

GROUP: *The Brilliant Balsam Bashers*

LOCATION: *Beautiful Woods SSSI*

EVENT: *Spring Balsam Bashing Work Party*

Grid Ref: *SO 000 0000*

DATE: *22 May 2022*

SITE ENTRY W3W Address: *made-up address*

SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS IDENTIFIED	PERSONS AT RISK	RISK RATING Hazard x Risk = Risk Level	CONTROL MEASURES	DATE ACTIONED & SIGNATURE
Volunteer underlying medical conditions - injury or illness is triggered by physical, outdoor activity.	Volunteers	1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all volunteers complete the daily sign-in form detailing medical conditions and measures they have in place e.g. those with asthma ask to see their inhaler. Risk to individual and group is assessed and work allocated accordingly or volunteer stopped from taking part in activity. 	19/5/22 LB
Catching Covid-19 from volunteers	Volunteers	3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use own transport to reach site. Work is outdoors in wide open spaces. Hand sanitiser and spare face masks are available. Safe distance is maintained between volunteers as per current guidelines. Tools and equipment not to be shared, but if they are then sanitize. Number of volunteers on site at one time set by Covid-19 guidelines. 	
Minor cuts and scratches from pulling or cutting vegetation incl. Himalayan balsam, bramble, bracken, thorny bushes, nettles.	Volunteers	3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Risks outlined at start of each work party All instructed as to what to do if sharps are found Gloves to be used. Extra care to be taken if handling blackthorn 	
Cuts from using slashers, pruning saws, loppers, secateurs.	Volunteers	3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Risks outlined at start of each work party All instructed in safe use of tools - the 'tools talk' Gloves must be used when using saws 	
Bruises, strains, sprains and from slips, trips and falls, when moving around on site, carrying tools, moving vegetation	Volunteers	3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Risks outlined at start of each work party - warning of unstable ground and issues of working on slippery, wet or uneven ground or on a slope. Regular breaks are built in to the event to reduce risk of accidents from tiredness or exhaustion 	

Risk Assessment Form For Local Action Groups Example

Hazard and Risk Identification

SHEET No: 2 of 3

GROUP: *The Brilliant Balsam Bashers*

LOCATION: *Beautiful Woods SSSI*

EVENT: *Spring Balsam Bashing Work Party*

Grid Ref: *SO 000 0000*

DATE: *22 May 2022*

SITE ENTRY W3W Address: *made-up address*

SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS IDENTIFIED	PERSONS AT RISK	RISK RATING <small>Hazard x Risk = Risk Level</small>		CONTROL MEASURES	DATE ACTIONED & SIGNATURE
Physical exhaustion, dehydration	Volunteers	2		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Risks outlined at start of each work party. Volunteers informed about importance of drinking water regularly, to pace themselves and not work excessively. Regular breaks are built in to the event, and more so during hot weather. 	<i>19/5/22</i> <i>LB</i>
Stings, tick bites (potentially leading to Lyme disease) and allergic reactions.	Volunteers	3		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Check online that there's not been a Lyme disease area warning. Volunteers with allergies let us know before starting (via sign-in form and verbally) and ensure they have an EpiPen. If no EpiPen in group, send volunteer home. Risks outlined at start of each work party. All to wear protective clothing e.g. long sleeves, trousers tucked into socks. Regularly wash hands and always wash hands before eating. Volunteers to check for signs after activity e.g. if develop an oval or circular rash, flu-like symptoms with aching joints check with their GP re. Lyme disease. 	
Exposure, hypothermia, heat exhaustion, sunburn.	Volunteers	2		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Check weather forecast 72, 48 and 24 hours ahead of event Inform volunteers, advise them of appropriate dress for weather, to have a spare set of dry clothes to hand if weather due to be wet. Volunteers informed to drink water regularly, wear sun-cream, don't get overheated or soaked. Have an emergency shelter as part of First Aid kit Event will be cancelled in extreme conditions e.g. very wet, heatwave. 	

Risk Assessment Form For Local Action Groups Example

Hazard and Risk Identification

SHEET No: 3 of 3

GROUP: *The Brilliant Balsam Bashers*

LOCATION: *Beautiful Woods SSSI*

EVENT: *Spring Balsam Bashing Work Party*

Grid Ref: *SO 000 0000*

DATE: *22 May 2022*

SITE ENTRY W3W Address: *made-up address*

SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS IDENTIFIED	PERSONS AT RISK	RISK RATING <small>Hazard x Risk = Risk Level</small>		CONTROL MEASURES	DATE ACTIONED & SIGNATURE
Anti-social behaviour from residents/members of the public	Volunteers	1		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Surveying can only be carried out from volunteers own private land, Public Right of Way (PROW), pavement or highway verge. 2. Landowner permission (and any other relevant consents) must be secured before venturing on to a site to work. 3. If aware of any anti sentiment locally, prior to the event use social media and posters to raise awareness of the importance of the work. 4. Ensure volunteers are equipped with knowledge of the reasons for the work so they can respond to questions. 5. Volunteers that experience anti-social behaviour are to inform the coordinator and call the Police on 101. 	<i>19/5/22</i> <i>LB</i>

Additional safety measures include:

- A first aid kit always to hand with trained 1st Aider.
- Water and/or cleanser will be available on site to wash hands; eyes and wounds
- A mobile phone for emergency contact will be on hand.
- Houses/amenities close by (fill out relevant house names) can provide a land line in the event of poor mobile phone signal or battery failure (unless owners are selfisolating).

Risk Assessment Form For Local Action Groups

GROUP NAME:

OUTDOOR EVENT:

DATE: LOCATION:

SITE ENTRY Grid Ref: SITE ENTRY W3W Address:

EVENT ACTIVITY:

NO. OF VOLUNTEERS:

ASSESSOR (print):

DATE: SIGNATURE:

ASSESSMENT DISCUSSED AND AGREED WITH EVENT ORGANISER:

COORDINATOR NAME (print):

AGREEMENT DATE: COORDINATOR SIGNATURE:

Assessment Review Dates (annually/change occurs):

DATE: BY WHOM:

DATE: BY WHOM:

DATE: BY WHOM:

Risk Rating:

HAZARD (Severity)	VALUE	RISK (Likelihood)
Negligible	1	Unlikely
Slight	2	Possible
Moderate	3	Quite Possible
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Low Risk: Risk can be acceptable.

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High Risk: Action MUST be prioritised and timetabled to reduce risk to an acceptable level.

Risk Assessment Form For Local Action Groups

Hazard and Risk Identification

SHEET No: of

GROUP:

LOCATION:

EVENT:

Grid Ref:

DATE:

SITE ENTRY W3W Address:

SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS IDENTIFIED	PERSONS AT RISK	RISK RATING <small>Hazard x Risk = Risk Level</small>		CONTROL MEASURES	DATE ACTIONED & SIGNATURE

Risk Assessment Form For Local Action Groups

Hazard and Risk Identification

SHEET No: of

GROUP:

LOCATION:

EVENT:

Grid Ref:

DATE:

SITE ENTRY W3W Address:

SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS IDENTIFIED	PERSONS AT RISK	RISK RATING <small>Hazard x Risk = Risk Level</small>		CONTROL MEASURES	DATE ACTIONED & SIGNATURE

Additional safety measures include:



AND ACTION!

- **MAPPING BALSAM USING APPS AND MAPS**
- **VOLUNTEER SIGN-IN SHEET**
- **PHOTO CONSENT FORM**
- **GIVING 'PERMISSION TO PULL BALSAM'**

Contents:

1. Mapping and Reporting – why both are important
2. Guide to mapping using What3Words
3. Example log sheet
4. Blank log sheet

1. Mapping and Reporting - why both are important

Mapping Himalayan balsam is a practical activity that involves (safely) walking the highways and Public Rights of Way in your local area and marking the balsam on a map. Mapping can take place any time from the appearance of the first balsam seedlings in April to the first frosts in autumn.

Mapping balsam leads to greater understanding of:

- the different locations where Himalayan balsam is growing locally
- the distribution and extent of balsam in your local catchment
- where the seeds are likely to have come from (the seed source)
- where you might see it in future by considering the pathways of spread
- what could be at risk nearby if it's allowed to spread e.g. nature reserves, orchards, gardens, and where effort could be focused to save those.

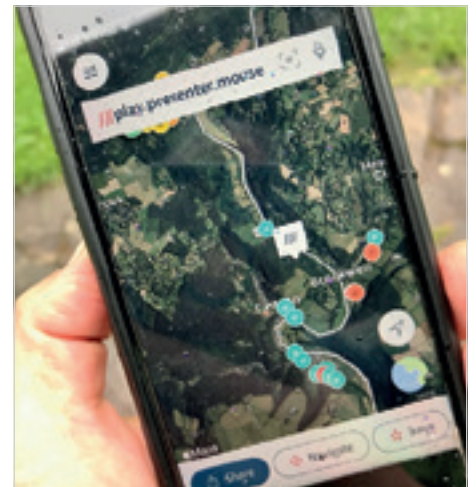


We recommend 2 methods:

- 1) the traditional Ordnance Survey paper map and pen approach
- 2) if you have a mobile phone, we recommend using What3Words (W3W), and we've provided a How to map Balsam using W3W guide on the next page.

This document contains a log sheet you can print off to take with you to note details such as density of plants, any landowner information, your grid reference or W3W location.

With this information you can plan your balsam control activities knowing that you are tackling it in the most effective way, ideally starting at the source and working downhill or downstream (see the Toolkit's Practical guide).



Reporting Himalayan balsam is as important as mapping, and can lead to:

- Increasing regional and national knowledge about the distribution and extent of the balsam problem
- Knowledge that enables government agencies and organisations to target funding, coordinate management and strategically tackle this species.

It's easy to submit reports. Every county or region has a **Local Environmental Record Centre** (LERC) - repositories for huge amounts of biological data – and you can either send the report directly in to your LERC or we recommend using the apps **iRecord** or **INNSMapper**, which all the LERCs access. INNS Mapper has the extra benefit of enabling the recording of control methods (manual, mechanical, chemical) over time.

iRecord: <https://irecord.org.uk/>

How to Use iRecord Guide: <https://irecord.org.uk/how-do-i>

INNSMapper: <https://innsmapper.org/home>

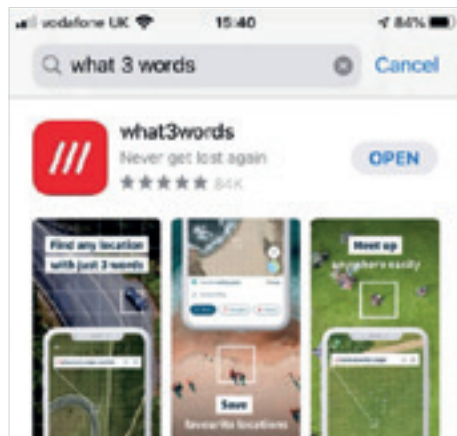


The Wye Valley AONB's 3 LERCs are:

- South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC): <http://www.sewbrec.org.uk/>
- Herefordshire Biological Record Centre (HBRC): <https://hbrc.org.uk/>
- Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records (GCER): <https://www.gcer.co.uk/>

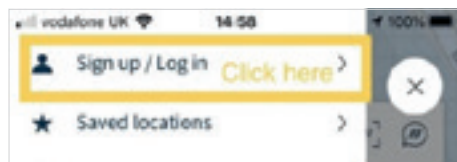
2. Guide to Mapping using What3Words (W3W)

You may wish to use W3W to record where Himalayan balsam is located in your local catchment, as W3W makes it easy to find, share and save precise locations (3 metre x 3 metre squares).



Step 1.

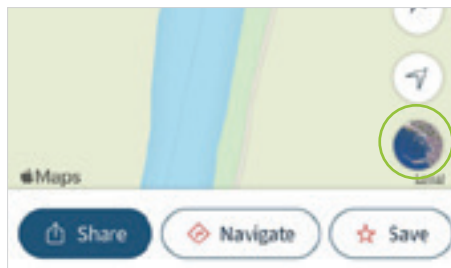
Downloading the app: Download the free app 'W3W' from the App store (for Apple phones) or Google Play (for Android phones).



Step 2.

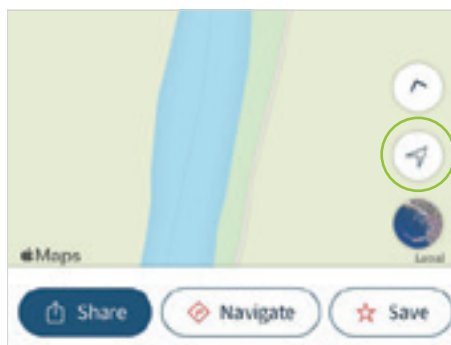
Signing up: Once downloaded, open the 'W3W' app and click on the icon with 3 horizontal lines in the top left hand corner, and click on the first option to 'Sign up'.

Create an account with an email address and a password. You may wish to create individual accounts and share your records with each other, or create a group account which multiple members can be logged into at the same time. This way everyone can see in real time where W3W points have been recorded on the map, which avoids duplication of records.



Step 3.

Map display: Once you have logged in, the app will take you to a map screen. Click the circle satellite image of a map icon in the bottom right corner to see a satellite view of the map.



Step 4.

Your location: To pinpoint the location where you are standing, click the compass arrow icon in the bottom right corner of the screen. Notice the three words that show up in the white box at the top of the screen. If you walk a few metres from where you were originally standing and press the compass arrow icon again, notice how the 3 words will change. These three words are a unique combination of words for the 3m² area where you are stood.

Step 5.

Finding W3W around you: You can also find W3W locations by exploring the map and clicking on different areas.

For example, if you are stood on a riverbank and there are Himalayan balsam plants on the opposite side of the river that you want to record the location of, you can click on that location on the map and it will give you the W3W for that location – you do not need to be stood in that location to find out the unique 3-word combination for the area where you want to record balsam.



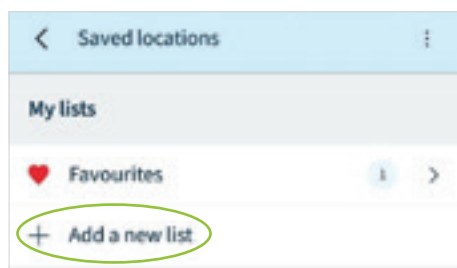
Step 6.

Recording W3W combinations: Once you have had a play around with the app and have looked at various locations on the map, you can begin to record Himalayan balsam in two different ways:

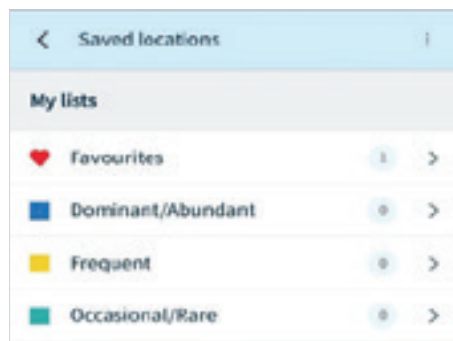
a) Recording balsam on a paper form (see 'Mapping Balsam Form' in toolkit)

1. Write your (rough) location on the balsam mapping form.
2. Find the unique 3-word combination for the area where you want to record the balsam.
3. Write this unique 3-word combination on the balsam mapping form in the allocated 'what3words address' column.
4. Estimate the extent of the balsam in the 3m2 grid square you are recording, using the predetermined categories on the balsam mapping form: **Dominant/Abundant**, **Frequent**, and **Occasional/Rare**.
5. Enter a description of the site and any landowner details (if you know who they are) on the form.
6. Repeat steps 1-4 for all of the W3W squares in your area that you think the balsam covers.
7. Move on to look for your next balsam location.

b) Recording balsam on the W3W app



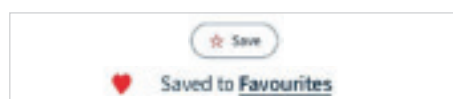
1. Click on the icon with 3 horizontal lines on the top left hand corner, and click on the second option to go into 'Saved locations'. Underneath the favourites folder, click on 'Add a new list' to create lists for your records.



2. Create different lists to help categorise your records. We suggest creating lists to categorise extent, e.g. **Dominant/Abundant** list, **Frequent** list and an **Occasional/Rare** list.



3. Once you have created your lists you can colour-code them by going into the list and clicking on the coloured square icon in the top right hand corner. You can then choose a colour for each of your lists.
4. Find the unique 3-word combination for the area where you want to record balsam either using Step 4 or Step 5 above.



5. When the correct area is selected on the map screen, click the 'Save' button at the bottom right hand corner of the screen. This will automatically save the location to a list called 'Favourites'



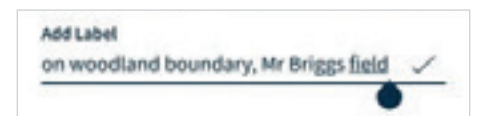
6. Click 'Change'. This will take you to a menu screen with your lists on it.



7. Deselect the favourites list and select the list you would like to save your record into, based on the extent e.g. **Dominant/Abundant**, **Frequent**, or **Occasional/Rare**.



8. You can then add a description for your record by clicking 'add label'. You may wish to include information such as:



- a. A description of the location e.g. *on woodland boundary*
 - b. Landowner information (if you know who they are) e.g. *Mr Briggs field*
9. Repeat steps 4-8 for all of the W3W squares in your location that you think the balsam covers.
 10. Move on to look for your next balsam location.



If you have any questions or need any help using the apps or the Mapping Balsam Form, visit the 'Contact Us' page on the Wye Valley AONB website: www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/contact-us

Mapping Balsam Form **EXAMPLE**

4 Of 5

Please use this form in conjunction with our **Mapping balsam** using **W3W** guide.

GROUP:	<i>The Brilliant Balsam Bashers</i>	LOCATION/S:	<i>Llanbgo - Catbrook</i>
DATE:	<i>2nd May 2023</i>	SURVEYOR NAME/S	<i>John F & Mary S</i>
START POINT (Grid ref or What3words):	<i>bubbles.swayed.brush</i>	END POINT (Grid ref or What3words):	<i>stood.umbrella.icon</i>

LOCATION	What3words ADDRESS	EXTENT			SITE DESCRIPTION	LANDOWNER DETAILS
		Dominant/Abundant	Frequent	Occasional/Rare		
Field below Green Farm – top of catchment	roses.moving.statue	✓			On woodland boundary	Mr Briggs field
Field below Green Farm – top of catchment	bizarre.green.hopper		✓		On woodland boundary	Mr Briggs field
Field below Green Farm – top of catchment	believe.velvet.swim			✓	On woodland boundary	Mr Briggs field
Road verge of Narrow Lane – near Jones Farm	jogging.squash.muscle		✓		On verge, growing along drainage ditch	Monmouthshire Highways Authority
Woodland next to Jones Farm	push.monkey.buzzing	✓			Large clump on woodland edge, spreading into woodland	Natural Resources Wales forestry
Woodland next to Jones Farm	understand.pop.toast	✓			Large clump on woodland edge, spreading into woodland	Natural Resources Wales forestry

Mapping Balsam Form

Please use this form in conjunction with our **Mapping balsam using W3W** guide.

GROUP:		LOCATION/S:	
DATE:		SURVEYOR NAME/S	
START POINT (Grid ref or What3words):		END POINT (Grid ref or what3words):	

LOCATION	What3words ADDRESS	EXTENT			SITE DESCRIPTION	LANDOWNER DETAILS
		Dominant/Abundant	Frequent	Occasional/Rare		

Volunteer Sign-in Sheet

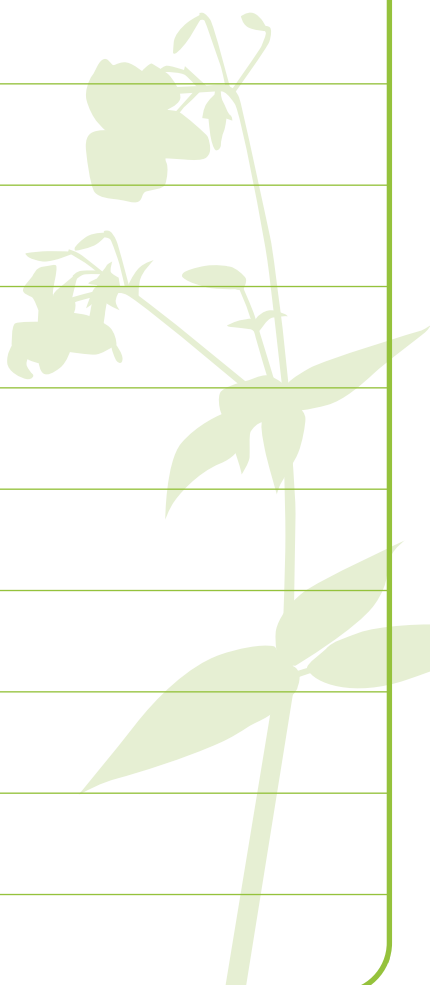
For Local Action Groups

INSURANCE FOR VOLUNTEERS

The insurance position for our volunteers is as follows:

By providing your details below you are indicating that you have read the above and accept the insurance conditions and proposals as set out for volunteers. Your contact details will be held for 2 weeks after the event and never be shared with a third party.

NAME	TEL NUMBER & EMAIL	NEXT OF KIN & THEIR CONTACT NUMBER IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES



Volunteer Sign-in Sheet

For Local Action Groups

NAME	TEL NUMBER & EMAIL	NEXT OF KIN & THEIR CONTACT NUMBER IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES



Photo Consent Form

For Local Action Groups

As a local action group we will be producing promotional materials to tell people about our activities and events and to recruit more volunteers. From time to time we take photographic images (moving and still) of subjects, and use case studies that can include these images and personal data (such as name, interests and achievements) to enhance and illustrate our materials.

By completing this form, you give us full permission to use these images and any personal information you supply to us in our materials, which reasonably promote or advertise our aims. This may include social media posts, printed publications, audiovisual and electronic materials, display materials and any other media we may use in the future. The images will not be used for any other purpose.

Thank you for your help

YOUR DETAILS

FIRST NAME:..... FAMILY NAME:

ADDRESS:.....

..... POST CODE:

TELEPHONE:.....

EMAIL ADDRESS:.....

Please state here if there are any ways in which you do NOT want us to use photo(s) of you:

.....
.....
.....
.....

SIGNED:..... DATE:.....
or type if emailed

DATA PROTECTION STATEMENT

Other than as specified above, the information that you give us here will only be used to contact you about these photo(s). We will not pass the details recorded on this form on to any other organisation without your permission.

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY			
NAME OF SHOOT / EVENT			
LOCATION OF SHOOT / EVENT		DATE	
IMAGE REFERENCE(S)			
CONTACT NAME		CONTACT PHONE NUMBER	

HIMALAYAN BALSAM

Impatiens Glandulifera



Photos courtesy of GB Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNSS)

WARNING: This pest plant explodes!

The bright Himalayan balsam plant hides a dark secret. Among those pink flowers, seed pods are developing that explode when ripe, firing 100's of seeds up to 7 metres in all directions. This enables this pest plant to spread and dominate new areas very quickly. Himalayan balsam is the tallest annual plant in the UK. It overshadows native plants and quickly takes over areas, creating what's called a monoculture. 'This is bad news for the insects and wildlife that need native plants to survive. Also, in winter the balsam dies back leaving bare earth that is easily washed into rivers, reducing water quality and smothering aquatic habitats.

Please help us to fight back!

How you can help...

- If you have a camera do take a photo of these instructions

- Get pulling:

- Where?

.....
.....
.....

- **When?** Before those seeds are ripe, between early May to mid-June, although you can pull later in the year if the plants haven't developed seed pods yet.
- **How?** Grip the lower stem and pull up the shallow root – it comes up with a satisfying tug! Snap the stem between the root and bottom node. Leave the plant lying on the ground alongside the path - it's classed as a 'controlled waste' so mustn't be removed off site. Take care not to block the path, culverts or watercourses.

- **Be Biosecurity Aware:**

- Avoid going near the balsam when those seed pods are exploding.
- Keep to the footpaths to minimise dispersal of the seeds on your footwear.
- If walking from a balsam-infested area to an area that's clear, do check the soles of your footwear and brush them off to avoid assisting its spread!



For more information



Thanks to the following for helping us to create this Balsam Action Toolkit

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National Heritage Lottery Nature Networks Fund

www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/closed-programmes/nature-networks-fund

Natural Resources Wales Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Fund

Severn Trent Boost for Biodiversity Fund

www.stwater.co.uk/about-us/environment/biodiversity/

Wye Valley AONB's Sustainable Development Fund

www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/grants/grants/

Content support

GB Non-Native Species Secretariat (GB NNSS)

www.nonnativespecies.org/

Nature Conservation Services

www.natureconservationservices.com/

Wales Resilient Ecological Network (WaREN)

www.northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/waren

Pembrokeshire National Park's INNS Team

www.pembrokeshirecoast.wales/conservation/invasive-non-native-species

Tees Rivers Trust

www.teesrivertrust.org/inns

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

www.ywt.org.uk/wildlife/conservation-action/west-yorkshire/invasive-species

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