

Himalayan Balsam

and its impact on UK invertebrates

Cost of control

£300m

Pods explode seeds up to

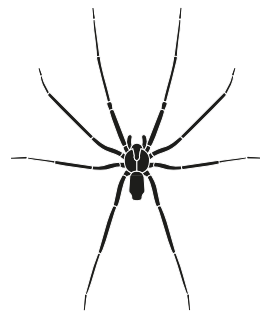
7m

Seeds per plant

800



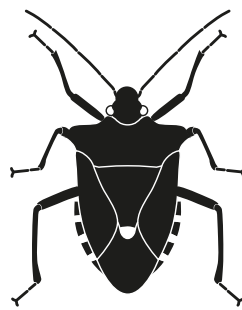
ALL invertebrate feeding groups negatively affected



75%
Spider species



64%
Beetle species



58%
True bug species



Detritivores



Herbivores



Predators

Detritivores

largely unaffected.
In the summer months
numbers significantly increase.



Himalayan balsam is one of the UK's most widespread invasive weed species, colonising river banks, waste land, damp woodlands, roadways and railways. Research by CABI scientists has shown local invertebrate biodiversity is negatively affected by the presence of Himalayan balsam.

They found that native plant community structure was different in the presence of Himalayan balsam, and coincided with significantly lower abundance of above-ground invertebrate detritivores, herbivores, and predators. Overall below-ground invertebrate groups were not affected, although detritivore abundance fluctuated significantly, with peaks during summer months.

The community shifts resulting from the presence of Himalayan balsam can potentially lead to fragmented, destabilised ecosystems, have serious consequences for ecosystem processes and functioning, and complicate habitat restoration unless remedial actions are implemented.

www.himalayanbalsam.cabi.org

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.