

**Botanic name :** *Impatiens glandulifera* Royle III. Bot. Himal. Mts. [Royle] 151, t. 28, f. 2. 1835 [Jan 1835] (IK)

**Common name :** Himalayan balsam, Himalaya-touch-me-not, Purple jewelweed

**Family :** Balsaminaceae

**Habitat :** Terrestrial

**Distribution :** Native to India and Western Himalayas; naturalized in 31 countries including throughout Europe, parts of North America and New Zealand sometimes in invasive form

**Description :** An annual, erect, herb; stems jointed, reddish colored, multi-branched, hollow, glabrous, shiny with large swollen nodes; leaves simple, oblong, ovate to elliptical, and arranged oppositely, sharply serrated at margins; flowers irregular, bilaterally symmetrical, pink to purple or red, blue, pink 2-14 arranged in a raceme, bearing 5 petals with the lowest sepal forming a sac that ends in a straight spur. Seed capsule

**Phytochemicals:** Flavonoids (ampelopsin, eriodictyol-7-O-glucoside, astragalins, kaempferol, kaempferol-glucosides, hyperoside, quercetin), 2-Methoxy-1,4-naphthoquinone, 1,2,4-Trihydroxynaphthalene-1-O-glucoside, 2-Hydroxy-1,4-naphthoquinone (Lawson), methylene-3,3'-bilawsonic acid,  $\alpha$ -Parinaric acid-a polyunsaturated fatty acid; terpenes-beta-phellandrene, volatile compounds from flower-pinene, camphene, cineole, terpineol, limonene; calcium oxalate

**Medicinal/Economic uses :** Anti-inflammatory, antibacterial (dental caries), and fungicidal. The plant is used as a 'Bach Flower Remedy', "Rescue Remedy" or "Five Flower Remedy"; flower extracts used to treat physical and emotional problems, in acute anxiety, restiveness, nervousness and stressful situations. Young leaves, immature seed pods, and shoots – cooked but taken with utmost caution; fresh pods often used to stir fries and curry; Seeds can be toasted, grounded, and used as a spice or substituted in recipes of hazelnuts. In Northern India, they are baked in cakes, breads and biscuits and traditionally mixed in stews and curries; also used as a substitute for nuts to prevent nut allergy and for almond powder. Flowers are used to make excellent floral jams and jellies. Seed oil is used in lighting. Young stems are edible after being blanched in a change of water and yield a crispy vegetable. An important source of nectar for bumble-bees, the plant is ornamental. Lawson's dye from the plant is the principal component of 'Henna'.