



Policeman's Helmet (Himalayan Balsam)

Impatiens glandulifera

Invasive Plant Alert

One of the biggest threats to natural ecosystems in Saanich is the spread of invasive non-native plants. The District of Saanich appreciates the cooperation of all residents in removing Policeman's Helmet from private property.

For assistance see contacts on reverse.

One of the top 10 invasive plants in the UK, this escaped garden ornamental has been found in a few locations in Saanich.

BC MAL

Why is Policeman's Helmet a problem?

- Highly invasive plant, especially in wetland and riparian areas.
- Displaces native plants, reduces biodiversity and alters wildlife habitat.
- Can contribute to flooding and erosion.
- Very difficult to control; significant impacts in Europe.

What does it look like?

- Tall annual up to 2-3 metres.
- Reddish, bamboo-like hollow stems.
- Pink to purple flowers (occasionally white).
- Leaves opposite or whorls of three; 5-18 cm long, serrated, lance shaped.

Habitat and biology

- Annual, succulent herb establishing dense stands.
- Flowers June to September; reported to outcompete native plants for pollinators (and is self-pollinating).
- Reproduces by abundant production of seeds (up to 2500 per plant), which burst open from mature fruit capsules spreading 3-5 m from the parent plant.
- Seeds are also spread by humans, water and animals.
- Roots are 10-20 cm long.
- This species needs higher soil moisture and is often found in riparian habitats and wetlands but also grasslands and woodlands. Can tolerate shade and a wide variety of soil types; will grow taller in nitrogen rich soils.

Distribution:

- Native to the Himalayas.
- Introduced in many areas throughout BC.



Lisa Scott



Lisa Scott



Crystal Wheeler

Invasive Plant Alert



Other resources

Invasive Species Council of BC
Coastal Invasive Species Committee
King County Noxious Weed Program
Report-a-Weed BC



City of Burnaby

What should you do?

- Spread the word, not the plant:** don't buy or plant Policeman's Helmet.
- Inform:** please contact Saanich (as below) to report locations.
- Stop seed spread:** brush/clean off clothing, tires and equipment before leaving the infested area.
- Remove:** if you have properly identified Policeman's Helmet on your property, use the best control methods (below) to eliminate it on your property.
- Monitor:** annually return to the site for several years to continue treatment.
- Replant:** after effectively eliminating this species over time, replant with non-invasive plants (such as appropriate native species).
- Volunteer:** find out more about volunteering to control priority invasive species with Saanich at www.saanich.ca/pullingtogether.

Small/Medium Infestations

- Manually remove all the plant and roots before flowering. Repeat twice per year if possible. If any plants remain, abundant seed production will continue the spread.
- Plan for proper disposal (below).

Large Infestations

- If you have a large infestation or a particularly difficult site for manual removal, please contact Environmental Services (below) for assistance.

Proper Disposal

- The District of Saanich is in the process of developing options for invasive species disposal. Please call Environmental Services or check the website for updates: www.invasives.saanich.ca
- Currently, the best option is to place all plant parts in garbage bags labelled "invasive species" and take to the Hartland Landfill.
- DO NOT COMPOST!

Who do you call?

Contact Saanich for assistance and more information about Policeman's Helmet, other invasive plants and volunteer opportunities.

On Private Land:

Saanich Environmental Services:

250-475-5471 or planning@saanich.ca

On Public Lands:

Saanich Parks:

250-475-5522 or parks@saanich.ca

www.invasives.saanich.ca

Noxious Weeds Bylaw No. 8080:

The District of Saanich requires all landowners clear their property of any noxious weeds and other vegetation that could spread or become a nuisance