

Smallflower Touch-Me-Not

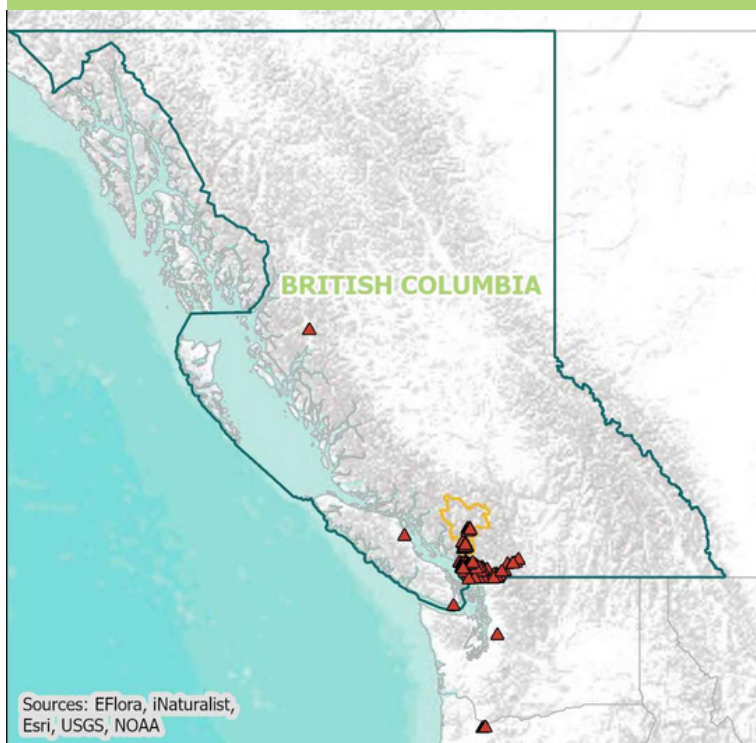
Impatiens parviflora

Small balsam, Small-flowered Jewelweed

FACTSHEET

Squamish: Strategic Control | Whistler: Contain | Pemberton: Eradicate

DISTRIBUTION



June
to
Sept.



July
to
Sept.



Aug.
to
Oct.

Origin: Smallflower touch-me-not is native to central Asia. Like other *impatiens*, it was likely brought to North America as a garden ornamental. The earliest known record of Smallflower touch-me-not in BC is in 1949.

Habitat: Smallflower touch-me-not is very adaptable: it does well in partial to full shade and will grow in moist to damp areas, but it can also withstand drier conditions. It is generally found along river edges, wetlands, lake shores, forest edges or clearings.

Reproduction: This species reproduces by seed. The plant produces seed capsules that explode when touched, effectively ejecting its seeds. One plant can produce a maximum of 10,000 seeds (although most plants produce between 1000 – 2000 seeds), which can remain viable in the soil for 3 years.

IDENTIFICATION



General: This species is a frost intolerant annual succulent herb that grows 20 – 60 cm tall.

Flowers: Pale yellow flowers with red spots on the inside occur in the leaf axils. They are 15 – 20 mm long.

Stems: Erect to ascending, smooth, succulent and single-stemmed or branched from the lower nodes.

Leaves: Alternate along the stem, stalked, egg-shaped to elliptic, finely and sharply saw-toothed. They are generally 3 – 12 cm long.

Seeds: This species produces 10 – 20 mm-long capsules that contain many seeds and explode when touched.

Roots: Shallow and fibrous.

Similar Species:

- **Native:** Jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) has flowers that are orange and spotted.
- **Invasive:** Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) is much taller and has pink flowers.

Updated October 2024

Vectors of Spread: The exploding seed capsules can cause the seeds to travel up to 3.4 m away from the parent plant. Longer-distance dispersal is generally caused by water flow, or mowing after seed set. Seeds can also be transported on the bark of timber and the fur of mammals. Lastly, humans are also responsible for the plant's spread, as Smallflower touch-me-not is still traded and planted for ornamental purposes.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Smallflower touch-me-not is abundant in certain portions of the Sea to Sky region, but has not yet infested all potential habitats. The goal is to contain the spread of Smallflower touch-me-not to the Whistler area.

- **Regularly monitor properties** for weed infestations.
- **Remove plant material from equipment**, vehicles or clothing used in infested areas and wash equipment and vehicles at designated cleaning sites before leaving infested areas.
- **Ensure soil and gravel** are uncontaminated before transport.
- **Minimize soil disturbances** (e.g., use grazing plants that prevent soil exposure from overgrazing), and use seed mixes with dense, early colonization (e.g., alfalfa or barley) to re-vegetate exposed soil and resist invasion.
- Ensure invasive plants (particularly flowering heads or root fragments) are bagged or covered to prevent spread during transport to designated disposal sites (e.g., landfill). **Do NOT compost.**

Smallflower touch-me-not can be controlled by:

- **Mechanical Control:** Smallflower touch-me-not is relatively easy to control if it is pulled up by hand. As an annual plant, its root system is very limited, so it is easy to pull up. The seeds last in the soil for up to 3 years, so it is possible to control an infestation with a few manual removals. Note that pulling the roots from the soil is not recommended when the plants are growing adjacent to streams as disturbance to the moist soil will likely cause stream bank erosion and possible alteration to the stream course.
- **Chemical Control:** Smallflower touch-me-not's riparian habitat makes chemical control impossible.
- **Biological Control:** No biocontrol agents are currently available for Smallflower touch-me-not in BC. Further research is required.

REPORT SIGHTINGS

visit ssisc.ca/report

If you suspect you've found smallflower touch-me-not anywhere in the Sea to Sky region, please **contact SSISC to report** and for the most recent, **up-to-date control methods**. All reports will be kept confidential.

IMPACTS

Ecological:

- Displaces native vegetation on stream banks, ultimately reducing biodiversity.
- Increases ditch and stream bank erosion.
- Alternate host for crop pests such as cucumber mosaic virus.

Economic:

- Infestations can choke drainage ditches, causing important infrastructure repair costs.



References: CABI, Dave's Garden, Electronic Atlas of the Flora of BC, Fraser Valley Invasive Species Society, Invasive Plant Atlas of the United States, King County, NatureGate, US Department of Agriculture, Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board.

Updated October 2024