

Small balsam (*Impatiens parviflora*)



ORIGIN: Central Asia

INTRODUCED TO EUROPE: 1831

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS: An annual plant with a fleshy, glabrous, branched stem. Leaves spiralling, broadly lanceolate. Leaf margin finely serrated, with pink tips on the teeth. Pale yellow flowers with a darker throat and measuring 1-2 cm including the straight spur, are held in loose racemes at the tip of stalks. Fruits are club-shaped capsules, 1.5–2 cm long.

ECOLOGY/HABITAT: Shady sites along forest edges and in the understory in moist forests, also in shady ruderal sites.

STATUS: Widespread all over Europe but practically absent in the Mediterranean area.

SIMILAR SPECIES: European native touch-me-not balsam (*Impatiens noli-tangere*) also has yellow flowers, but these are brighter yellow and larger, 2–3 cm across, and have a recurved spur. In Europe, jewelweed (*I. capensis*), is increasingly becoming established. This species is similar to touch-me-not balsam in most respects, but has orange, rather than yellow flowers. Both species have toothed leaf margins with tiny white tips on the teeth.