

# “B” Rated Weeds

A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant,  
but may have limited distribution in some counties

**Policeman’s helmet**  
*Impatiens glandulifera*

**Other common names:** Ornamental  
jewelhead, jewelhead, Himalayan balsam

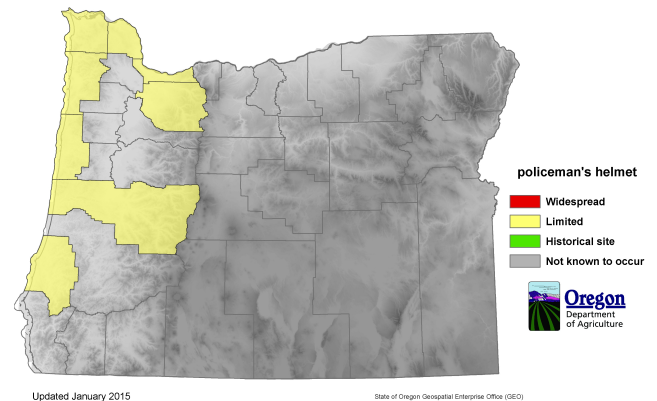
**USDA symbol:** IMGL  
**ODA rating:** B



**Introduction:** Native to India and western Himalaya, policeman’s helmet was introduced as an ornamental to gardeners throughout the Pacific Northwest. This rapidly growing annual is now spreading throughout the Coast Range, from Canada through Oregon.

**Distribution in Oregon:** Escaped populations in Oregon are still fairly uncommon, though new sites are identified each year. The western slopes of the Coast Range contain the largest populations.

**Description:** Policeman’s helmet is an herbaceous succulent annual, smooth stemmed, and hairless. The plants can grow to 8 feet tall when supported by blackberries, though most will be smaller. The leaf arrangement can be opposite or whorled with three leaves per node. Leaf shape varies from oblong to egg-shaped, with serrated edges. Flowers are solitary, irregular, ranging from white to all shades of pink, with 5 petals (2 fused) and 3 sepals (2 fused) and five fused stamens. The flower shape resembles an English policeman’s helmet. The seed capsules are elongated and when disturbed, eject up to 800 seeds a short distance.



**Impacts:** Policeman's helmet forms dense stands in riparian areas and moist lowlands, excluding native forbs.

**Biological controls:** No approved biological control agents are available.