



Himalayan balsam management by Finvasive LIFE –project (2019–2023)

Finvasive LIFE / FANC (LIFE17/NAT/FI/00528)



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Himalayan balsam – excellent species to teach about IAS

- Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) is widely known in Finland. It is easy to identify and to teach others to recognise.
- The species causes moderate negative effects to riparian habitats and local plant and invertebrate biodiversity.
- As an annual species with short term seed bank, weeding will get you encouraging results even after one treatment season.

This is why we chose Himalayan balsam as the logo species.



Public weeding events & citizen science tools

- Invasive LIFE regional coordinators organise **IAS info** and **HB weeding events** in their region (Central Finland, South Savo, North Savo, South Karelia).
- Events are **mostly organised in cooperation** with the local municipality or FANC/Martha local association.
- Regional coordinators have written a (HB) **weeding event organising guide** for in-project and public use. Guide includes also promoting the event and options for event IAS waste management. Team added a **Covid update** on the guide this spring.
- Number of participants vary greatly, you can expect everything from 0 to 30 people showing up.
- Participants are later sent an email with link to feedback & questionnaire form



Public weeding events & citizen science tools

- Event participants are also shown and encouraged to start using **project's IAS mobile reporting tool: viekas.laji.fi**
- The reporting tool (web form) is easy and quick to use and accessible to all smart phones and tablets.
- Better quality of data (GPS and photo information)
- Submitted data goes to laji.fi -database (FinBIF) → GBIF, and is also used to report Finland's advances in IAS work to EU.
- For 2021, Finvasive considers also promoting iNaturalist service for reporting IAS sightings.

Regional coordinators also submit event information to national IAS control event database

<https://laji.fi/en/theme/vieraslajit/instructions>



Finvasive HB weeding event – step by step

1. Welcoming words to participants and thanks for showing up.
 2. Participants are given a quick tutorial to IAS, HB, the control area in question and the weeding method.
→ *Helps building IAS awareness and creating context and sense of purpose to work at hand.*
 3. HB waste is gathered in large piles and left to rot at the site OR bagged and transported to proper waste facility – depending on the site and property ownership.
1. Weeding events last for 1,5–3 hours.
 2. At the end, participants are thanked again for their efforts and invited to later events.

Events in late summer/early fall: everyone is asked to make sure no seeds are stuck to soles of shoes or clothes before leaving site.





Covid restrictions introduced 2 m minimum distance between weeders, and hand sanitizer was made available. Photo: Raisa Ranta/ FANC



Enclosure for IAS/HB info & gathering HB (in Lappeenranta)
works best in busy public spaces!



HB weeding site numbers

2019:

Himalayan balsam weeding events open for public organised in 20 different sites – 1 to 3 events per site per season.

2020:

Balsam weeding events organised in nearly 50 sites

Project also monitors change in plant species assemblage over the course of weeding seasons until fall 2023 (species cover-% in 1 m² squares)





Thank you for listening!

