

Washington Invasive Ranking System

Washington Natural Heritage Program

Impatiens capensis (Spotted Jewelweed)

Assessed by

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Ecological Impact Rank: **Low** (39)

Confidence: **Moderate** (58)

Management Difficulty Rank: Low (47)

Confidence: High (70)

Biological Characteristics of Invasiveness: High (74)

Confidence: Moderate (50)

Concern Related to Distribution and Abundance: High (76)

Confidence: Moderate (50)



Photo Credit: Keir Morse 2016, used under Creative Commons license (CalPhotos, 2024).

Ranking Notes

Rapid assessment only, based primarily on professional expertise.

This species is native to the U.S. east of the Rocky Mountains.

Legal Listings

[Washington State Weed Board](#): List C

[Washington Invasive Species Council](#): No

Section 1: Distribution and Abundance

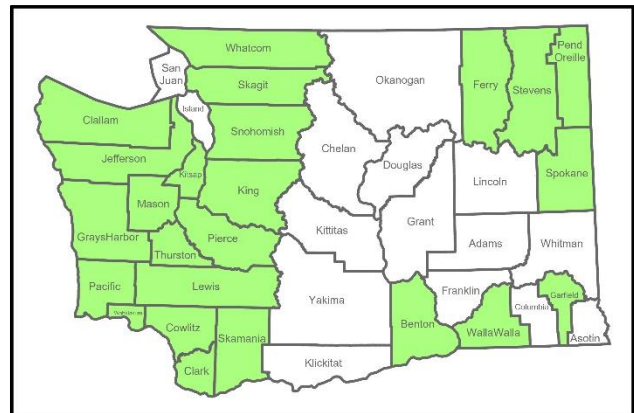


Figure 1. Distribution of counties where *Impatiens capensis* has been documented in Washington State (CPNWH, 2023; EDDMapS, 2023; iNaturalist Contributors, 2023).

Q1: Current Range Size in Washington

Rating: High

Confidence: Moderate

This species is found in 62% of counties in Washington (CPNWH, 2023; EDDMapS, 2023; iNaturalist Contributors, 2023).

Source: Herbarium records and other observations

Q2: Current Trend in Total Range

Rating: Moderate

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q3: Proportion of Potential Range Currently Unoccupied

Rating: Low

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q4: Local Range Expansion or Change in Abundance

Rating: Moderate

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q5: Diversity of Ecosystems Invaded

Ecosystem types: Forest & Woodland, Emergent Open Wetland, Forested Wetland

Rating: Moderate

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Section 2: Biological Characteristics

Q6: Aggressive Mode of Reproduction

Rating: Yes

Confidence: High

Source: Professional expertise

Q7: Innate Potential for Long-Distance Dispersal

Rating: No

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q8: Potential to be Spread by Human Activities

Rating: Yes

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q9: Allelopathy

Rating: No

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q10: Competitive for Limiting Abiotic Factors

Rating: Yes

Confidence: Moderate

Impatiens capensis is a strong competitor and has even been shown to successfully compete with introduced *Alliaria petiolata* (Garlic Mustard) in its native range (Karriker, 2025).

Source: Informal publication, Professional expertise

Q11: Growth Form

Rating: Yes

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q12: Germination Requirements

Rating: No

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q13: Invasiveness of Other Plants in Genus

Rating: Yes

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q14: Shade Tolerance

Rating: High

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q15: Disturbance Tolerance

Rating: Yes

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q16: Propagule Persistence

Rating: Unknown

Confidence: Not rated

Source: Professional expertise

Q17: Palatability

Rating: Yes, plant is unpalatable

Confidence: Moderate

This plant contains numerous harmful chemicals, such as selenium and calcium oxalate crystals; while deer and rabbit herbivory have been observed in its native range, *Impatiens capensis* can be toxic to livestock (Mitchell, 2025).

Source: Informal publication, Professional expertise

Section 3: Ecological Impact

Q18: Impact on Ecosystem Abiotic Processes

Abiotic Processes: None listed

Rating: Insignificant

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q19: Impact on Ecosystem Structure

Rating: Low

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q20: Impact on Ecosystem Composition

Rating: Moderate

Confidence: Moderate

This species is highly competitive and may significantly reduce the diversity and cover of native forbs and graminoids in wetlands where it occurs.

Source: Professional expertise

Q21: Impact on Particular Native Species

Rating: Moderate

Confidence: Moderate

Impatiens capensis is known to hybridize with native *I. ecomuta* (Zika, 2020).

Source: Professional expertise

Q22: Observed Ability to Invade Undisturbed Ecosystems

Rating: Low

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q23: Observed Ability to Invade Naturally Disturbed Ecosystems

Rating: Yes

Confidence: High

Source: Professional expertise

Section 4: Management Difficulty

Q24: General Management Difficulty

Rating: Moderate

Confidence: High

Source: Professional expertise

Q25: Minimum Time Commitment

Rating: Low

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q26: Impacts of Management on Native Species

Rating: Low

Confidence: High

Source: Professional expertise

Q27: Inaccessibility of Invaded Areas

Rating: Moderate

Confidence: Moderate

Impatiens capensis is common in freshwater intertidal wetlands that can be very difficult to enter due to dense vegetation and irregular boat access.

Source: Professional expertise

Q28: Sociopolitical Implications of Management

Rating: Moderate/Low

Confidence: Moderate

This plant has a very attractive flower and a number of reported medicinal uses (Mitchell, 2025).

Source: Professional expertise

Additional Comments

None

References

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