

Balsaminaceae

touch-me-not-family

Two genera are included in this small family of succulent herbs. Leaves are simple, lobed or toothed, with pinnate veins. The irregular flowers are perfect and twisted, so that they are pendulous. Sepals are three, the lowermost pouch-shaped and reflexed to form a spur, containing a nectary. The irregular corolla is made up of five fused petals. The uppermost is distinct, while the lower is lobed. Five stamens unite to form a cap over the ovary, of 4–5 carpels. Fruit is an explosive dehiscent capsule or a drupe.

Impatiens L.

touch-me-nots

There are about 450 species of *Impatiens*, mostly tropical and found in Africa or Asia. Ours has the calyx and corolla, three-merous. The calyx has two vestigial sepals above, the lowermost modified into an enclosed pouch, opening forward and extending beyond the corolla to the rear. The corolla is seemingly made up of three petals —two lateral petals, each bilobed and an upper petal, wider than long. Fruits are explosive capsules, splitting along the sutures to reveal five valves.

Key to species

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| A. Leaves opposite or whorled. | <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i> |
| aa. Leaves alternate. | B |
| B. Flowers orange-yellow; spur curving forward. | <i>I. capensis</i> |
| bb. Flowers pale yellow; spur spreading 90 degrees or straight but not recurved. | C |
| C. Nectary spur spreading to form 90 degree angle. | <i>I. pallida</i> |
| cc. Nectary spur straight. | <i>I. parviflora</i> |

Impatiens capensis Meerb.

Spotted Touch-me-not; Jewelweed; impatiente du Cap



Photo by Marian Munro

Leaves are alternate and widely lanceolate, their margins toothed. Flowers are orange with distinctive reddish spots. The nectary may extend 8mm and is strongly recurved.

Flowers July and August.

Grows in moist shady soil, streamside or along ditches, in thickets. Usually in alluvial soil with lots of leaf mould.



Photo by Martin Thomas

Common throughout.

Ranges across Canada south to OR, TX and FL.

***Impatiens glandulifera* Royle**
Impatiens glandulifera



Photo by David Mazerolle

A tall coarser species than our native ones, this plant is a showy garden escape. The nearly-sessile lanceolate leaves are arranged in whorls. Margins serrate and the apices are long-acuminate. Flowers are quite large, pink to purple, with bluish spots. They are arranged in racemes on long peduncles.

Flowers during August and September.

Fallow soils and roadside thickets.

Scattered from Brier Island to Halifax and Pictou counties.
An introduced species, with a tendency to be invasive.

NS to MB, south to NY in the east;; BC to MT and southward
in the west.



Photo by Sean Blaney

***Impatiens pallida* Nutt.**

Pale Touch-me-not; impatiente pâle



Photo by Marian Munro

A smooth plant with broadly ovate leaves, their margins are sharply toothed. Flowers are pale yellow and without spots. The nectary spurs diverge at a ninety degree angle from the corolla. The brownish red spur is only 5mm long.

Flowers during July and August.

Alluvial soils as along intervalles and in thickets.

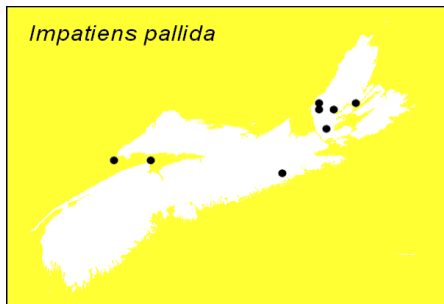
Uncommon from Kings Co., Isle Haute, to northern Cape Breton and more frequent eastward.

NF to ON, south to OK and GA.

STATUS: YELLOW-listed in NS.



Photo by Sean Blaney (*I. pallida* & *I. capensis*)



***Impatiens parviflora* DC**

Small-flowered Garden Touch-me-not; impatiente à petites fleurs

Resembling the Pale Touch-me-not, but it has the nectary spur straight, not diverging.

Flowers from July to September.

Escape from cultivation, tending to be found near old gardens.

Wolfville.

NS to QC; BC. Introduced from Eurasia.

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