

**Impatiens balsamina**

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**Introduction**

Balsam produces flowers of various colors in the leaf axils on plants from six inches to two feet tall (Fig. 1).

**General Information**

- **Scientific name:** *Impatiens balsamina*
- **Pronunciation:** im-PAY-shenz bal-SAM-min-uh
- **Common name(s):** Balsam, Touch-Me-Not
- **Family:** Balsaminaceae
- **Plant type:** annual
- **USDA hardiness zones:** all zones (Fig. 2)
- **Planting month for zone 7:** Jun; Jul
- **Planting month for zone 8:** May; Jun; Jul
- **Planting month for zone 9:** Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug
- **Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** Mar; Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep
- **Origin:** not native to North America
- **Uses:** mass planting; container or above-ground planter; border
- **Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

**Description**

- **Height:** 1 to 2.5 feet
- **Spread:** .5 to 1.5 feet
- **Plant habit:** upright
- **Plant density:** dense
- **Growth rate:** fast
- **Texture:** medium

**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite
- **Leaf type:** simple
- **Leaf margin:** serrate
- **Leaf shape:** lanceolate
- **Leaf venation:** pinnate
- **Leaf type and persistence:** not applicable

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1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-279, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October, 1999 Please visit the EDIS Web site at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu.

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**Impatiens balsamina -- Balsam**

**Figure 2.** Shaded area represents potential planting range.

- **Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches
- **Leaf color:** green
- **Fall color:** not applicable
- **Fall characteristic:** not applicable

**Flower**

- **Flower color:** white; pink; salmon; purple; lavender
- **Flower characteristic:** showy

**Fruit**

- **Fruit shape:** no fruit
- **Fruit length:** no fruit
- **Fruit cover:** no fruit
- **Fruit color:** not applicable
- **Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

- **Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable
- **Current year stem/twig color:** green
- **Current year stem/twig thickness:** very thick

**Culture**

- **Light requirement:** plant grows in full sun
- **Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; acidic; loam
- **Drought tolerance:**
- **Soil salt tolerances:** unknown
- **Plant spacing:** 12 to 18 inches

**Other**

- **Roots:** not applicable
- **Winter interest:** not applicable
- **Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding
- **Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive
- **Pest resistance:** very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics
**Use and Management**

Balsam grows best in full sun to shade on well-drained but moist soils, and should be spaced 12 to 14 inches apart. Plants will need a mostly shaded area in USDA hardiness zones 8 and 9 during the summer. Balsam grows poorly in USDA hardiness zones 10 and 11 during the summer unless placed in total shade. In USDA hardiness zones 9b, 10, and 11, *Impatiens* is generally planted in the fall for winter and spring color.

Balsams develop good root systems and transplant well, but may wilt for a day or two after transplanting. Even large plants can be successfully moved if they are watered frequently after being relocated.

The seed can be sown directly into the garden. Germination takes 8 to 14 days at 70-degrees F.

**Pests and Diseases**

Aphids suck plants juices causing distorted growth. Spotted cucumber beetle feeds on the blossoms. Tarnished plant bug feeds on the new shoots causing them to turn black. Leaf spots are an infrequent problem. Infected leaves can be picked off.