Chemical Control
A glyphosate based weed killer approved for use near water is recommended for sensitive areas or herbicides containing 2, 4-d amine in sites away from water:

Weed Wiper: Effective where the weed is growing among other vegetation, use a weedwiper (or brush or sponge) to wipe herbicide onto the leaves of individual plants.

Foliar Spray: Use the manufacturers recommended concentration in a knapsack sprayer to spot treat individual plants or for broadscale spraying of dense growth. Spraying should only be carried out in cool, dry, calm weather. Note - on river banks that the area should be reseeded with suitable species soon after to stabilize the soil and suppress weed regrowth.

Please take care when using herbicides and carefully consider your impacts on nearby land or waterways. Read the label carefully, and always use appropriate safety equipment.

Timing
Do not disturb Himalayan balsam if seed pods are present. Herbicide treatment for Himalayan balsam is most effective in the spring, before flowering (April – mid June). It should take about 2 - 3 years of annual treatments to clear the infestation, after which you should perform annual checks to control any new seedlings growth.

All Plant Protection Products should be used in accordance with the product label and with Good Plant Protection Practice as prescribed in the European Communities (Authorization, Placing on the Market, Use and Control of Plant Protection Products) Regulations, 2003 (S.I. No. 83 of 2003). Herbicides / pesticides authorised for professional use may only be used by persons who have completed the prescribed training and hold the relevant specified certificate(s).

Further Information
Further Information about Himalayan balsam and other invasive species can be found at:
http://www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/sud/
http://www.invasivespeciesireland.com
http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/projects/invasive-species/
http://biodiversity.galwaycommunityheritage.org/

Contact Details
To report Himalayan balsam or other problem species, or for advice on planning a control programme in your area contact the Galway County Biodiversity Project Manager Elaine O’Riordan.

Phone: 091-495921
Email: invasivespecies@galwaycoco.ie

About
Himalayan balsam, Impatiens glandulifera is an attractive annual plant that was introduced to Ireland from the Himalayas in the 19th Century and has since become an invasive weed. It is becoming more widespread in County Galway particularly in damp habitats such as river banks and wet grasslands.
How to recognise it?
Himalayan balsam is a tall plant (up to 3m) with large pale pink to purplish trumpet shaped flowers from June to October. It has distinctive brown/green to reddish colour hexagonal hollow stems. Its leaves are dark green, lance shaped with serrated edges. Hanging seed pods which explode when touched.

How does it spread?
The exploding seed pods of Himalayan balsam scatter seeds for a distance of up to 7 metres which are transported by wind or water. However, the seeds only remain viable in the soil for a year or two.

Why is it a problem?
Himalayan balsam spreads rapidly forming dense colonies which crowd out native plant species. In the winter it dies back exposing bare soil which is vulnerable to erosion by weather or flood waters. This may lead to siltation of rivers and loss of spawning beds for fish or flooding.

Additionally, the flowers produce copious amounts of nectar and it may attract insects away from other plants thus reducing pollination of native wild flowers.

Legislation
Himalayan balsam is a listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) which makes it an offence under Regulation 49 to plant, disperse, allow or cause to grow this plant in the Republic of Ireland.

Regulation 50 makes it an offence to import, buy, sell, breed, reproduce or propagate, advertise, offer or export for sale, publish a price list, transport or distribute any species on the Third schedule. (This regulation is not in effect pending Ministerial notice)

A licence may be obtained in certain circumstances to permit these activities.

Manual Control
Pulling: Himalayan balsam is shallow rooted and can be easily pulled up. Pulled plants can be allowed to rot on site provided there are no seed heads. Wear gloves to protect hands.

Grazing: Where suitable, grazing by cattle or sheep from April right through the growing season can be effective. Continue grazing regime annually until no new growth occurs.

Cutting: Cut at ground level (below first node) using a scythe, strimmer or flail cutter before flowering occurs in June.

What can you do?
- Report the location of the weed to Galway County Council or the National Biodiversity Data Centre.
- Inform landowners who have Himalayan balsam on their property.
- Do not dump plant cuttings or soil elsewhere.
- Control: Use the most suitable method to remove the infestation from your property.