

Jewelweed

Impatiens capensis

Identification Features:

- Annual wildflower that got its name from the tendency of dew or rain to bead up on the leaves and sparkle in the sun like jewels.
- Grows 2-5 feet tall.
- Leaves are bluish-green, OVAL and with coarsely TOOTHED margins.
- Flowers grow singly or in clusters of twos or threes. Each flower is funnel-shaped, orange, and one inch long. Petals are 3-lobed. Flowers bloom mid-Summer – Fall.
- Seeds are produced in insect pollinated flowers and can be forcefully ejected up to two meters away from the parental plant. Physical disturbance of the seed pods, such as by the touch of a passing animal, can stimulate the sudden ejection of the seeds. This feature is also the source of two common names for jewelweed: “touch-me-nots” and “poppers.”



“Jewels”

Habitat:

- NATIVE to Pennsylvania.
- Prefers moist areas and can be found in woodlands and along streams.

Wildlife Value:

- Jewelweed is pollinated by a wide variety of animals collecting nectar from the flowers including hummingbirds, butterflies, bees, wasps, and flies.
- Caterpillars of many types of moths have been observed feeding on the leaves of jewelweed.
- White-tailed deer eat the leaves.
- Jewelweed seeds are consumed by a number of species of birds including ruffed grouse and bobwhite quail.
- Seeds are also consumed by rodents including white-footed mice.



Flowers



“Popped” Seeds



Seed Pod

Human Value:

- The leaves and stems of jewelweed contain fluids that are rich in the chemical lawsone. Lawsone has anti-inflammatory and antifungal properties that can ease the irritation of several types of skin irritations including reactions to poison ivy, stinging nettle, and insect bites and has also been used to help treat human fungal infections like athlete’s foot.