

Impatiens niamniamensis



Family: Balsaminaceae

Genus: *Impatiens*

Species: *I. niamniamensis*

Common names: Parrot Impatiens, Congo Cockatoo

Origin: Cameroon through central East Africa to Sudan and Kenya.

Location in GBG: 19th century garden, Ornamental Shrubs Bed 8, somewhat hidden behind a border of *Clivea*.

Time of flowering: March & April

Meaning of name: The scientific name *Impatiens* (Latin for "impatient") and the common name "touch-me-not" refer to the explosive dehiscence of the seed capsules. The mature capsules burst, sending seeds up to several metres away.

Available in Friends nursery? No.

Description

Impatiens niamniamensis grows about 60–90 cm high. This evergreen, perennial species has an erect, succulent, brown stem resembling wood. Leaves are simple, ovate-oblong or elliptical, spirally arranged, about 10 cm long. It produces bright and colourful bird-shaped flowers (hence the common name Congo cockatoo) with a long, curled nectar spur. These unusual flowers are usually scarlet red and yellow and can reach a length of about 3.5 cm. Fruits are explosive capsules of about 14–16 mm.

Impatiens niamniamensis
in Geelong Botanic Gardens.

Geelong Botanic Gardens Map

Cultivation

Balsams grow both in and out of direct sunlight; they prefer moist, rich soils, like roadside ditches, reed beds, fens, river banks and forest edges.

Impatiens in general

Impatiens is a genus of about 850 to 1,000 species of flowering plants, widely distributed throughout the Northern Hemisphere and the tropics. Together with the genus *Hydrocera*, *Impatiens* make up the family Balsaminaceae.

Common names include **impatiens**, **jewelweed**, **touch-me-not**, **snapweed**, **patience**, and, *I. walleriana*, an East African species, has a common name in Great Britain, "busy lizzie", as well as, ambiguously, **balsam** (also the common name of *Impatiens balsamina* from Asia).

The leaves are toxic to many other animals, including the budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus*, but the bird will readily eat the flowers.

It is an invasive weed in many places, and tends to dominate riparian vegetation along polluted rivers and nitrogen-rich spots. Thus, it exacerbates ecosystem degradation by forming stands where few other plants can grow, and by rendering riverbanks more prone to erosion, as it has only a shallow root system.

Reference: Wikipedia.org

Impatiens niamniamensis Parrot Impatiens or Congo Cockatoo



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www.friendsgbg.org.au
www.geelongaustralia.com.au/gbg/