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*Impatiens balsamina*

[Synonyms : *Balsamina angustifolia*, *Balsamina coccinea*, *Balsamina cornuta*, *Balsamina foeminea*, *Balsamina hortensis*, *Balsamina lacca*, *Balsamina minutiflora*, *Balsamina mollis*, *Balsamina odorata*, *Balsamina racemosa*, *Balsamina salicifolia*, *Impatiens balsamina* var. *corymbosa*, *Impatiens coccinea*, *Impatiens cornuta*, *Impatiens eriocarpa*, *Impatiens stapfiana*]

**GARDEN BALSAM** is an annual. Native to Asia (particularly India, China and Japan), it has small spurred, fragrant scarlet flowers.

It is also known as Balsam, *Balsamin* (Swedish), *Balsamina* (Italian), *Balsamine* (German), *Balsamine des jardins* (French), *Balzámina* (Slovak), *Balzamino* (Esperanto), *Balzamino ĝardeno* (Esperanto), *Belle amie* (French), *Bel-zanmy* (Creole), *Bontil* (Punjabi), Camphor plant, Common balsam, *Dupati* (Bengali), Garden touch-me-not, *Gartenspringkraut* (German), *Gelosia* (Italian), *Gulmendi* (Hindi), Horned balsam, *Impazienti* (Italian), *Inai ayam* (Malay), *Kamantigi* (Filipino/Tagalog), *Kina çiç* (Turkish), *Netýkavka balzámina* (Czech), *Netýkavka balzáminová* (Slovak), Rose balsam, Spotted snapweed, Swallow leaf, and Zanzibar balsam; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of impatience.

There are pink, scarlet, yellow, purple or white cultivated varieties.

Warning – strong doses can cause vomiting.

*Balsamina* is derived from Latin *balsamum* (sweet-smelling balsam gum) meaning ‘balsam-bearing, balsamic or like balsam’.

In the East juice from the pressed flowers is used to dye fingernails red. Garden balsam is also used to dye silk.

In Vietnam a decoction of the leaves has been used as a hair shampoo.

Some authorities have indicated that in the past the leaves may have been eaten as a vegetable on the Indonesian island of Bali.