

Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)



Key Identifiers:

- Erect, hardy, herbaceous perennial; 20-60" in height; showy, magenta flowers from July to September
- Leaves entire, opposite or in whorls of three and lance shaped; all lacking teeth
- Stems are stiff, 4 to 6 sided and angular
- Flowers have 5 to 7 purple petals in a dense clustered spike. Persistent spike.
- Fruits are dry capsules, ranging from green to brown. Each plant produces approximately 2,000,000 seeds.

Habitat:

- Purple loosestrife can grow in a wide variety of naturally and human disturbed sites in shallow fresh water
- Prevalent in roadside ditches, shores of ponds/streams and a variety of wetlands
- Quickly crowds out native species in wetlands, creating a monoculture that provides little benefit to native wildlife

Methods of reproduction and dispersal:

- Seeds dispersed by water, wind and in mud attached to animals
- Spreads vegetatively through root and stem segments
- Spreads quickly and forms dense thickets
- Mechanical clipping can contribute to rapid spread

Management Approaches:

- Hand cutting may be moderately successful with small populations. Cutting is best done just before flowering. If done too early, more flowering stems may be encouraged to grow.
- All cuttings must be removed and bagged. Any portion of the plant not removed will potentially resprout.
- Rodeo/Roundup (Rodeo should be applied to cut stems. Cut low on the stem, about knee level.
- Timing is crucial because seed set can occur if plants are in mid to late flower. Where possible, flower heads should be cut and bagged prior to Rodeo/Roundup application