

Lythrum salicaria, Purple Loosestrife

Purple Loosestrife is native to Eurasia and northern Africa. The plant commonly grows in wet soils or and prefers full sun, but can still grow in partially shaded environments. They are very well suited for wet climates due to stem tissues that develop air sockets surrounding cells - allowing the plant to conduct respiration even when partially submerged in water.

Description: The stems are rigid and lined with lance-shaped leaves. The leaves are 5-14 cm long and oppositely arranged. Leaf pairs typically grow at a 90 degrees angle from one another. Leaves closer to the flowers tend to be more upright. Full grown plants can reach up to 4 meters tall.

Control: Small clusters can be removed manually, though the root crown must be completely pulled out. Herbicides (glyphosate or triclopyr) may also be effective. Both mechanical and chemical removals require several years of action to extinguish the seedbank. In addition, biological controls have been successfully established in many different states.

Look-alikes: Some species that are similar to Purple Loosestrife are; Fireweed (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), Swamp Loosestrife (*Decodon verticillatus*), Winged Loosestrife (*Lythrum alatum*), Blue Vervain (*Verbena hastata*).

Flower Time and Description: Purple Loosestrife blooms from May to September. The flowers are purple, usually with 5-7 petals – growing in pairs/clusters on 10-40 cm long spikes.

