

# Purple Loosestrife Fact Sheet

*Lythrum salicaria*

Lythraceae Family



Linda Wilson, University of Idaho, Bugwood.org



Rob Routledge, Sault College,



Mark Schwarzlander, University of Idaho, Bugwood.org

## Distinguishing Features:

- ❶ **Flowers:** Showy magenta terminal spikes, with each flower having 5-7 petals.
- ❷ **Seeds:** Black seeds are contained in capsules. A mature plant can produce 2.7 million seeds.
- ❸ **Leaves:** Lanceolate, 1.5 to 4 inches long. Arranged in an opposite, alternate, or whorled manner along the stem. Stems are somewhat square with 4-6 sides.
- ❹ **Flowering Time:** April - May (after the first year). Seeds mature in June - July.
- ❺ **Life cycle:** Perennial. It can reach up to 10 feet tall and 5 feet wide and has a persistent, perennial tap root and spreading rootstock.

## Impacts:

- Invades wetlands, riparian areas, lakes, ponds, wet meadows, ditch banks and other areas with standing water.
- Purple loosestrife is a vigorous competitor and can crowd out other vegetation including native species.
- Loosestrife stands provide poor cover for waterfowl.

## Control:

- For small infestations, digging can be an effective control option. Cutting alone is not a control option for purple loosestrife, because shoots and adventitious roots will develop.
- Biological controls have shown excellent control for large infestations. Loosestrife beetles, *Galerucella californiensis* and *Galerucella pusilla*, adults and larvae impact plant growth and reproduction by feeding heavily on the plant's leaves, stems and buds. The loosestrife root weevil, *Hylobius transversovittatus* adults feed on plant foliage and the larvae feed within the roots.
- Herbicide applications are not recommended because of the plants proximity to water.



Bernd Blossey, Cornell University, Bugwood.org



Salt Lake County Weed  
Control Program  
[www.weeds.slco.org](http://www.weeds.slco.org)  
385-468-6101  
weeds@slco.org