

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE

Lythrum salicaria

Lythraceae, the loosestrife family

Category: Containment

Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org

FACTSHEET INFORMATION

Summary of Invasiveness

- Purple loosestrife is a semi-aquatic plant that can disrupt wetland functions and change aquatic habitats by altering water chemistry, out-competing native species, and decreasing ecosystem biodiversity.
- It can cause direct economic losses by reducing livestock forage values and stocking rates, and restricting water flow in irrigation systems.

Description

- Semi-aquatic perennial that can grow up to 8 feet tall.
- Erect stems are square or 5-sided, with nodes in opposite pairs or whorls of three.
- 3-10cm long, lance-shaped leaves with smooth margins arise from each node.
- Purple flowers in a dense, terminal spike grow up to 3 feet long.
- Reddish brown, flattened, oval to triangular capsules are numerous.

Introduction and Movement

- Purple loosestrife is native to Eurasia and was introduced to North America in the 1800's as a garden ornamental.
- The plant can thrive in a wide range of moist habitats and primarily inhabits wetlands, stream banks, canals, ditches, and pond edges.
- It can easily spread by careless disposal of garden material, and its high seed production allows it to spread by wind, water, and human and animal vectors.

Prevention Strategy

- To prevent accidental introductions, learn how to identify Purple loosestrife and eradicate infestations on your property.
- When gardening, always research plants before planting and purchase seeds from licensed nurseries.
- Always remove and properly dispose of all seed and plant materials on vehicles, clothing, shoes and pets before you exit or enter outdoor recreational sites.
- Always Remember To: **KNOW WHAT YOU GROW & KNOCK IT OFF!**

Sources

- CABI Invasive Species Compendium: <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/31890>
- Idaho's Noxious Weeds 9th Edition, University of Idaho: <http://www.extension.uidaho.edu/publishing/pdf/BUL/BUL816.pdf>.



Kim Holzer, ISDA



Kim Holzer, ISDA



Kim Holzer, ISDA

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: INVASIVESPECIES.IDAHO.GOV
TO REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES IN IDAHO, PLEASE CALL 1-877-336-8676.

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE DISTRIBUTION MAP

