

**Impacts:** Purple loosestrife adapts to natural and disturbed wetlands where it out-competes and replaces native grasses, sedges, and other lowering plants that provide a higher quality source of nutrition for wildlife. Purple loosestrife is able to form dense, homogeneous stands that restrict native wetland plant species and reduce habitat for waterfowl.



**\*It is illegal to propagate, sell or transport this plant within the Commonwealth.**

**Suspected Means of Introduction:** Purple loosestrife was introduced to the northeastern U.S. and Canada in the 1800's, for ornamental and medicinal uses. It is still widely sold as an ornamental, except in states where regulations now prohibit its sale, purchase, and distribution such as PA.

# BioBullies

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## Purple Loosestrife

*Lythrum salicaria*



**Description:** Purple loosestrife is an erect perennial, herbaceous plant in the loosestrife family. Mature plants can have 1 to 50 branching square stems giving it a bushy or woody appearance. The leaves are opposite or whorled, lance-like and are rounded at the base. It flowers from June to September. The flowers are magenta and have 5 to 7 petals each.

**Native Range:**  
Europe and Asia

**Resources for  
Identification and  
Control of Purple  
Loosestrife**

Headwaters Invasive  
Plant Partnership

University of Illinois  
Extension - Champaign,  
Ford, Iroquois, and  
Vermilion Counties

Plant Profile Database -  
USDA

Weed of the Week - USDA  
Forest Service

Midwest Invasive Plant  
Network



# Purple Loosestrife

## *Lythrum salicaria*



**Habitat:** Purple loosestrife is capable of invading wetlands such as freshwater wet meadows, tidal and non-tidal marshes, rivers and stream banks, pond edges, reservoirs and ditches.

**Biology:** The extended flowering season and prolific seed production of purple loosestrife make it very successful. A mature plant may be capable of producing an estimated 2 to 3 million very small seeds per year. The seed bank can remain viable for 20 years. It also reproduces vegetatively through underground rhizomes at a rate of about one foot per year, forming dense mats and aiding in the establishment and expansion of the plant.

**Control Methods:** Small infestations of young purple

loosestrife plants may be pulled by hand, preferably before seed set. For older plants, spot treating with a glyphosate herbicide (e.g., Rodeo® for wetlands or another herbicide approved for wetland use) is recommended. These herbicides may be most effective when applied late in the season when plants are preparing for dormancy. However, it may be best to do a mid-summer and a late season treatment, to reduce the amount of seeds produced. When using herbicides, read the label and follow all state and federal requirements. Biological control may be most effective for long-term control of large infestations. Three insects have been approved by the USDA to control purple loosestrife.