

---

# Purple Loosestrife

*Lythrum salicaria*



Purple Loosestrife invades wetlands and quickly overwhelms native vegetation. It hybridizes with native loosestrife, threatening the native species' gene pool.

- Flower spikes are 4-16" tall from July to October, ranging from magenta to white along each vertical stem.
  - Leaves are dark green, narrow, lance-shaped, 1-4" long and attach directly to the stems.
  - Stems grow up to 3-6', and, like all plants in the mint family, are square.
  - Seed capsules dry along the stems. **Each plant can produce up to 2.5 million tiny seeds/year.**
-



## HOW TO CONTROL:

Loosestrife-eating insects show promise for controlling, though not eliminating this invasive, so are not yet feasible as a control method.

- Dig or pull the entire plant in early spring when the soil is moist; root fragments will re-sprout. Monitor 3+ yrs.
- Cut the entire plant at the beginning of the flowering season, or cut and bag flowering heads before seeds set; broken stems can sprout. Repeat to exhaust seed bank for as many as 3+ years.
- Or, if more than 25' from water, spray 2% glyphosate during the flowering period in summer (before seeds set); monitor and repeat for 3+ years.

---

# Sources

## Purple Loosestrife

Maine Invasive Plants, bulletin #2508; Invasive Plant Atlas of New England,  
[www.invasive.org](http://www.invasive.org)

## Controls

<https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/2508e/>

Casco Bay Invasive Species Network, Winning the War on Weeds

---