PLANTS

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE

Lythrum salicaria
Origin: Eurasia

Purple loosestrife is a showy wetland plant that grows up to 2.5 m tall. Leaves are 5-14 cm long, sword-shaped, and oppositely arranged. Stems are square and hairy, with an upright growth habit. Purple flowers have five to seven petals and grow in pairs or clusters on tall spikes; flowering starts in June and lasts into early fall. Older plants can have many woody stems growing from a single root crown.

INVASIVE RANKING, NYS

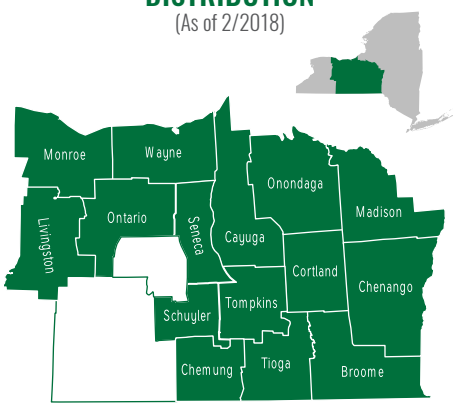
Very High

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Chemical
Physical
Biocontrol
Prevention

DISTRIBUTION

(As of 2/2018)



www.fingerlakesinvasives.org

HABITAT

Purple loosestrife will grow in wet meadows, tidal and non-tidal marshes, the edges of waterways and ponds, and in ditches. It can tolerate a wide range of conditions, including shading and flooding, but prefers moist, organic soils.

THREAT

Once established, purple loosestrife outcompetes and replaces native wetland species, which decreases biodiversity. This reduces the quality of habitat and food sources important to wetland wildlife, such as marsh birds and waterfowl. Dense stands of purple loosestrife also alter biogeochemcial and hydrological processes in wetlands.

MANAGEMENT

Small infestations can be pulled by hand, though this must be completed before seeds are produced. Care must be taken to completely remove the root crown. The soil should not be overly disturbed when removing plants in case it releases seeds from the seedbank. All plant parts should be bagged and removed, and may be burned. Herbicides approved for aquatic use, preferably broadleaf-specific, can also effectively control small stands. Biocontrol options include: *Galerucella spp.* beetles, which eat the leaves and target the area of the plant that produces seeds; *Hylobius transversovittatus*, a root-mining weevil: and seed-eating beetles *Nanophyes marmoratus* and *N. brevis*. These insects can suppress populations to non-significant levels, although they do not eradicate them.

REFERENCE - New York Invasive Species Information. Purple Loosestrife. Cornell University Corporate Extension. http://www.nyis.info/index.php?action=invasive_detail&id=64

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