PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE

Lythrum salicaria L.

Prohibited - Control

Common Names
Spiked Loosestrife, Purple Lythrum

Life Cycle
Herbaceous perennial

Native Range
Eurasia

Look-a-Likes
Dame's Rocket (pg 65)
Fireweed (pg 83)

Habitat
Upland sites but is best known as an invader of wetlands or aquatic habitats such as ditches, wet meadows, ponds, marshes, river and stream banks as well as lake shores.

Means of Spread
Reproduces both by seed and vegetative means which allows it to quickly invade new landscapes. Each flower spike can produce thousands of seeds that are easily dispersed by wind, water, animals, and humans.

Identification
Plant - Herbaceous, wetland perennial, 4 to 7 feet tall with a 4 to 6 sided wood-like stem.

Leaves - Opposite, sometimes whorled, lance-shaped, and downy with a slightly wavy yet smooth edge. Leaf pairs are positioned at right angles to the leaf pairs above and below.

Flower - Each plant can have from one to many spikes of pinkish-purple flowers. Center of the flower is yellowish and surrounded by 5 to 7 petals that have a wrinkled appearance.

Bloom Time - July to September

Seed and Fruit - Tiny seeds are released from 2-parted capsules.

Root - Thick and woody roots. On mature plants, roots are extensive and can send out 30 to 50 shoots, creating a dense web. Pieces of the roots and stem fragments can also produce new plants.

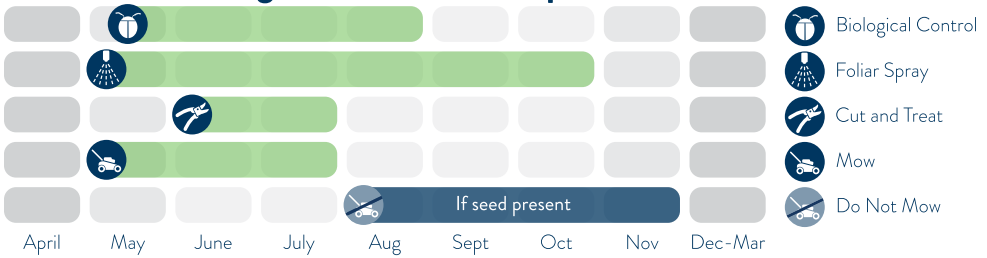
Management
Mechanical - Mowing is seldom an option due to wet environments. Cutting of flower spikes can be an effective control of seed production. Hand pulling or digging of plants can also be effective but care should be taken to remove entire root systems if possible. Resprouting can occur from roots and root segments left in the ground or on the site.

Chemical - Purple loosestrife is a semi-aquatic to aquatic species, it is important to use only herbicides that are labeled and approved for use in or around water.

Biological - Biological control agents in the form of two leaf feeding beetles of the same genus (*Galerucella calmariensis* and *G. pusilla*) have been very effective in Minnesota.

Above left: *Galerucella pusilla.*

Treatment Timing



Effective herbicide formulations: 2,4-D, aminocyclopyrachlor, glyphosate, imazamox, imazapyr, metsulfuron + aminopyralid, triclopyr.