

Purple Loosestrife

Lythrum salicaria

Detect this pest plant before it becomes a problem

Why it's a problem:

Purple loosestrife is a threat to wetland and riparian habitats.

- It has a strong ability to rapidly outcompete native wetland species, therefore reducing biodiversity at wetland sites.
- Tall, dense stands can reduce recreation opportunities.
- It prefers moist soil. However, once established a population can tolerate dry soil conditions.
- Disturbed areas are more prone to invasion because exposed soil is ideal for germination.
- It is spread in many ways, including by water, wind, machinery, wildlife and people.

Appearance:

Purple loosestrife is an herbaceous, erect, hairy perennial.

- It grows up to 2m tall with purple flower spikes, a taproot and fibrous roots.
- It can form dense surface mats and produce up to 50 stems per rootstock.
- Stems are four sided, pink at the base and die off in winter.
- The narrow leaves are normally in opposite pairs.
- Between December and February a densely hairy flower head spike (20-25cm long) is produced, made up of purple-magenta flowers with five or six petals.
- Flowers are followed by blackish seed capsules 3-5mm in length

Location:

Purple loosestrife primarily threatens wetland habitats, including river and stream banks, pond edges, lakes, roadside ditches and reservoirs.

Get more information:

- [Weedbusters](#) provides descriptions and images to help with pest identification.
- [Agpest](#) is an identification tool for pests, biology, impact and management for farmers and agricultural professionals.
- [iNaturalist](#) is a sharing tool that contributes to biodiversity science for avid nature observers.
- Manaaki Whenua – [Landcare Research](#) provides information on weeds and biocontrol
- [Ministry for Primary Industries](#) (MPI) for information on protecting New Zealand from biological risk.
- Practice [biosecurity hygiene](#) to stop the spreading of pests.



Contact us:

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If you see this plant on your property or need help to identify a plant in the Wellington Region, contact us on **0800 496 734** or email pest.plants@gw.govt.nz.

We help to support landowners with the management of this pest plant found in the Wellington Region.