

# Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)

## DESCRIPTION

Erect herbaceous perennial with woody stems

**Height :** 4 to 10 feet

**Leaves:** Lance-shaped, stalkless

**Flowers:** In July and August, showy magenta spikes with individual flowers of 5 to 7 petals attached close to stem; 30 to 50 stems per plant

**Fruit:** Seeds mature August-September



## ECOLOGICAL THREAT

Spreads by prolific reseeding and rerooting of fallen stems; one plant can produce 2 to 3 million seeds a year

Can produce a dense monoculture, crowding out sedges, grasses, and other aquatic plants valuable to wildlife

Occurs in variety of wetland habitats but prefers open areas

## NATIVE ALTERNATIVES

*Iris versicolor* Blue Flag Iris

*Lobelia cardinalis* Cardinal Flower

*Lobelia siphilitica* Blue Lobelia

*Verbena hastata* Blue Vervain

*Veronicastrum virginicum* Culver's Root



## CONTROL

**Mechanical:** Hand pull small infestations before seeds set. If growing in perennial garden, dig out and replace with a native plant listed above.

**Chemical:** Wetland sites require professional application  
**Biological:** Biological control is the recommended long-term method to reduce this plant. USDA has approved 6 insect species for biological control; two leaf-eating beetles were introduced and are under study in CT.