

# Purple Loosestrife



Found in wetlands. Perennial, 3'-7' tall, with up to 50 stems topped with purple flower spikes. One main leader stem, but many side branches often make the plant look bushy. Clipped plants grow back, and cut stems readily re-root in soil to produce new plants. Many areas of the state use safe biocontrol beetles that feed on the loosestrife to keep it in check and allow other plants to grow.

## Leaves

Simple, lance-shaped and do not have petioles. Usually opposite and rotated 90 degrees from those below, but are sometimes whorled.

## Flowers

Closely attached to the stem with 5-6 pink-rose colored petals. Blooms from the bottom of the flower spike to the top from early July to September. Plants can bloom the first year after seeds germinate.

## Fruits & seeds

Capsules burst open when mature in late July-September. A single stem can produce 100,000-300,000 seeds per year. Mature plants with many stems can produce 2 million seeds. Seeds are viable for at least 7 years.

## Roots

Large woody taproot and many side roots. Plants intertwine to form dense clumps.

## Stems

Green, sometimes tinged purple, stiff, erect, and generally 4-sided (older stems, 5 or 6 sided).

## Similar species

Garden loosestrife is a non-native, wetland garden escapee with yellow flowers. Smaller, native winged loosestrife is found in moist prairies and wet meadows, has winged, square stems, solitary flowers in separated leaf axils, paired lower leaves and alternate upper leaves. Swamp loosestrife arches out from shorelines, has mostly whorled leaves, and





flowers in well-separated leaf axils.

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