

How to Identify Purple Loosestrife

(*Lythrum salicaria*)



USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region
Invasive Plant EIS Team

Size:

- Can be anywhere from 4 to 8 feet tall at bloom time

Habit:

- Tall, erect perennial herb, very branched at the top of the stalk, with multiple densely flowered bloom spikes



Linda Wilson, University of Idaho,
www.forestryimages.org

Seed pods:

- Oval to round golden-brown capsules about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ " long, with pointed teeth
- Golden-brown seeds, the size of a grain of sand



Linda Haugen, USDA Forest Service,
www.forestryimages.org

Flowers:

- Peak bloom season late June to mid-July, but can be found in bloom as late as September
- Many bright purple-pink flowers in a long stalk at the top of the plant
- Six petals (may be 5 to 7), about 1" wide and $\frac{1}{2}$ " long
- Yellow flower centers
- Usually twice as many stamens as petals



How to Identify Purple Loosestrife Not in Bloom

Stems:

- Square, sometimes 5-angled, downy or fuzzy
- If you roll the stem between your fingers, you can feel the edges



Richard Bean, Maryland Department of Agriculture (3)

Leaves:

- Long, narrow with pointed tips, smooth edges and heart-shaped bases
- Joined directly to the plant stems, no leaf stalks
- Opposite, two across the stem from each other at each node; occasionally whorled, in groups of three at the same node
- Usually covered with soft, downy hairs, especially on the underside

Habitat:

- Areas of fresh to brackish water in moist or saturated soils; wet meadows, ditches, streambanks, marshes, floodplains in part to full sun



Website: www.dnr.maryland.gov
E-mail address: kkyde@dnr.state.md.us
Contacts: Kerrie Kyde @ 410-260-8534