

## CARP Factsheet

### INVASIVE ALIEN PLANT: The Poster Child

**COMMON NAME:** Purple Loosestrife

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Lythrum salicaria*

**PLANT TYPE:** Perennial Herb

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

**Form** – upright, stout, branched stem

**Height** – 50cm to 150cm

**Leaves** – simple, opposite, or in whorls of 3, smooth, no stalks, downy

**Flowers** – in spikes, magenta, small regular flowers, 5-7 petals

**Fruit** – small capsule (6mm long) containing many dark seeds

**Blooms in** – July through September (and later)

**Other Features** – stem feels square, whole plant usually covered in downy hairs, may have many stems (up to 50) on one plant

**ORIGIN:** Eurasia

**INTODUCED (early 1800s) FOR:** ornamental, medicinal

**HABITAT:** numerous wetland habitat types

**MEANS OF SPREAD:** wind-dispersed seed, and vegetative

**PROBLEMS:**

- outcompetes native plants in wetlands
- prolific seed production creates an enormous seed bank
- eradication of large populations is very difficult

**IF YOU HAVE THIS PLANT ON YOUR PROPERTY:**

- remove it promptly, and do not compost material from this plant (dry and burn, or regular garbage)
- hand pull individual plants before they go to seed



Photos: **Flowering Plant** – John D. Byrd, Mississippi State University, [www.forestryimages.com](http://www.forestryimages.com), **Flower** – Linda Wilson, University of Idaho, [www.forestryimages.com](http://www.forestryimages.com), **Infestation** – Eric Coombs, Oregon Department of Agriculture, [www.forestryimages.com](http://www.forestryimages.com)