

# Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)

PL LYTH SAL

Perennial species that often forms solid stands in aquatic to semi-aquatic sites. One plant can produce many stout, 1 to 3 metres tall, branched stems. Introduced as an ornamental from Europe in the early 1800's.



## ***Distribution***

Not currently found in the Thompson-Nicola Regional District.

Please report **all** occurrences.

## **Interesting Facts:**

Invades wetland areas and can expand quickly due to abundant seed production. Astringent herb used for treatment of diarrhea and dysentery.

## **Quick ID**

Pink-purple flowers in long, dense clusters.

Leaves opposite.

Square stem.

Found in most habitats.

## **“Look-Alike” Species**

Fireweed, *Chamerion angustifolium*/  
*Epilobium angustifolium*, also has pink flowers in long, dense clusters at the top of the plant, but has a four-lobed flower and alternate stem leaves.



**Manual Treatment:** Mechanical treatment is best when infestations are small. Seed heads can be cut and removed to eliminate seed production. Rosettes can also be removed mechanically. Larger mature plants may require digging to be uprooted. Bag and remove all stems to prevent new plants from sprouting.



Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
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**Flowers:** Flowers in long, dense, vertical clusters (or terminal racemes) with leaves. Showy flowers with 4 to 8 wrinkled petals. Sepals have 8, 10 or 12 prominent green veins.

**Leaves and Stems:** Opposite leaves without stalks, sometimes in spirals (or whorls) around the stem. Lance-shaped, slightly hairy with smooth edges. Stiff, square or octagonal stem. Can be smooth or with soft hairs.

**Seeds:** Numerous brown to black seeds in a small, brown, two-chambered capsule. Can produce over two million seeds annually. Viable for up to 20 years.

**Roots:** Woody taproot and extensive branching fibrous root system.

**Reproduction and Dispersal:** By seeds and underground horizontal roots (rhizomes). Detached root or stem fragments can also form new plants.

**Habitat Preference:** Near shorelines in wetlands, floodplains, ponds, streams, rivers, lakes, ditches, canals and other disturbed wet soil areas. Well-established plants can persist on dry sites for many years. Can tolerate a wide range of growing conditions.

