

## Purple Loosestrife: List A Species

### *Lythrum salicaria*



**County Management Strategy:** This species must be eradicated statewide.

**Status in Delta County:** Purple Loosestrife was found in 2008 southwest of Cedaredge. The 20 acre infestation is on private land south of southwest Melinda Road. It was reported by local residents. The landowners were very cooperative in allowing access and treatment. This infestation was treated by helicopter in 2008 and 2011. Control activities in 1009-2010 were by ATV.

**Control Methods:** Mechanical control can be effective for small infestations but must be repeated, often for five years or more. Timing of herbicide applications is important. Early summer applications should be done just before flowering to prevent flowering and seed set. Fall applications can be done from late August through September, but before a hard freeze. Flowerheads must be removed to prevent spread of seeds. Several biocontrol agents are available, but establishment is dependent on proper regulation of water levels and may work better in drier habitats. Biological control agents are available, however, it is not recommended in Delta County because eradication is the management goal for this species.

**Identification:** A perennial with creeping, rhizomatous roots that grows up to 10 or more feet tall. A wetland invader, it thrives in moist conditions. Leaves are lance shaped with veins that do not reach the edge of the leaf but parallel the edge. The very showy purple to magenta flowers grow on long stalks and have 5-7 petals each. The ribbed stems are square or 6-sided. Also called purple lythrum.

**Other names:** purple lythrum, rainbow weed, spiked loosestrife, salicaire

**Similar Species:** An uncommon native loosestrife is shorter and more delicate, with fewer flowers. Gayfeather or blazing star, a native plant, has coarse, more linear leaves that are much narrower than loosestrife. Fireweed, a common native plant, has only 4 petals per flower, a round stem and the flower heads form an elongated triangle.

**Control Timing:** Before or during early flowering in late June and early July. Plants can continue to bloom until August.. Mature flowerheads must be removed before the first frost.

**Control target:** Prevent seed production and stress root system.

#### **Additional Information (External Links)**

[Invasivespecies.gov](http://invasivespecies.gov) *(A gateway to Federal and State invasive species activities and programs).*

[Integrated Pest Management Information Service](#)

[USGS Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center](#)

[Natural Resources Conservation Services \(NRCS\) Plant Database](#)

[the green line Online](#) *(The Newsletter of the Colorado Riparian Association)*

[The Pennsylvania Integrated Pest Management Program](#)

[The Nature Conservancy, Invasives on the Web](#)

#### **Photos:**

[http://plants.usda.gov/cgi\\_bin/topics.cgi?earl=plant\\_profile.cgi&symbol=LEVU](http://plants.usda.gov/cgi_bin/topics.cgi?earl=plant_profile.cgi&symbol=LEVU)