

Lythrum salicaria

Invasive to Maine

Purple Loosestrife,
Spiked Loosestrife

Upland
Forests, Fields, Wetlands, and Developed Areas

Leaves



fyrefiennnd, www.flickr.com



Look for leaves that are blade-shaped and up to 6 to 10 cm long. They are often covered in tiny, soft hairs. Leaves are arranged oppositely or sometimes in whorls of three (see diagram).

LEAF ARRANGEMENT	LEAF TYPE	LEAF/LEAFLET SHAPE	LEAF/LEAFLET EDGE
 ALTERNATE	 SIMPLE	 PALMATE	 SMOOTH
 OPPOSITE	 COMPOUND-PALMATE	 OVAL	 TOOTHED
 WHORLED	 COMPOUND-PINNATE	 BLADE	 WAVY

Plant



Meredyth Eufemia, GMRI



Look for a plant 1 to 2 m tall with long thin leaves growing on square stems. From July to September look for purple flowers on long flower spikes.

Stem



urtica, www.flickr.com



Look for stems that are square, have lots of branches and grow up to 2 m tall.

Seasonal Change



Meredyth Eufemia, GMRI



From July to September look for purple flowers with 5 to 7 petals that grow in clusters on 10 to 40 cm long flower spikes.

www.vitalsignsme.org

Similar Species

Not many species in Maine look like Purple Loosestrife. Fireweed has similar flowers and leaves, but its leaves are arranged alternately and it has a round reddish stem. Purple Loosestrife has leaves arranged oppositely on a square-shaped stem.

Fun Fact

Purple Loosestrife was brought from Europe to New York City in the 1800s. It has since spread throughout the country. One plant can produce up to 2.7 million seeds each year! Recently, a non-native beetle was introduced in Maine to control the spread of Loosestrife.