

Lythrum salicaria

Invasive to Maine

Purple Loosestrife,
Spiked Loosestrife

Upland
Forests, Fields, Wetlands, and Developed Areas

Leaves



RickP, Wikimedia



Look for leaves that are lance-shaped and 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	 LANCE-SHAPED	 TOOTHED
 WHORLED	 COMPOUND-PINNATE	 ROUND	 WAVY

Plant



Meredyth Eufemia, GMRI



Look for a perennial plant (dies back in fall) 1 to 2 m tall with long thin leaves growing on square stems. Flowers form on long slender spikes.

Stem



urtica, www.flickr.com



Look for stems that are square, have lots of branches and grow up to 2 m tall. Stems are covered with fine hairs.

Seasonal Change



manyeyes, Vital Signs



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.

Similar Species

Purple Loosestrife is similar to American Germander, a native plant found in moist habitats but not in wetlands. The leaves of Purple Loosestrife are smoother whereas the leaves of Germander are coarsely serrated with deep veins. The flower of Germander has a vase shape.

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.

