

Lythrum salicaria

Invasive to Maine

purple loosestrife,
spiked loosestrife

Upland
Forests, Fields, Wetlands, and Developed Areas

Leaves



VS user 72as80, Massabesic Middle School



Look for leaves that are lance-shaped and 6-10 cm long. In late fall and winter, leaves are reddish-brown and have little hairs. They are arranged oppositely along the stem, or sometimes in whorls of three.

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

Plant



VS user manyeyes



In late fall and winter, look for a brown stem with reddish-brown leaves. Each plant has multiple long spikes covered in seed pods.

Stem



VS user 72jv82, Massabesic Middle School



In late fall and winter, look for a square brown stem that can grow up to 2m tall. Look for stems that are covered in small hairs.

Seasonal Change



VS users manyeyes & 42cs21, Massabesic MS



In late fall, purple petals fall off the flower spikes. Look for the remaining seed pods clustered together on the long spikes. The pods are dried up and brown.

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 germander flower has a vase shape.

Did You Know?

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, non-native *Galerucella* beetles were introduced to Maine to control loosestrife's spread.