

Root out Purple Loosestrife

Purple loosestrife is a strikingly beautiful wildflower that was brought to North America in the early 1800s. It put down roots - literally - in the east and spread rapidly westward.

Today, it can be found across much of Canada and the United States. This exotic invader crowds out native plants and destroys food and habitat for wildlife. It blooms from mid-July to the end of August in all kinds of wetlands.

You can take steps to help curb the spread of this alien intruder in your backyard and your community!



- Never transplant purple loosestrife to home or cottage gardens.
- Make sure you have the right plant! Don't be confused by native purple loosestrife look-alikes, such as fireweed and blue vervain.
- To help control smaller patches, hand-pull younger plants.
- Dig out the older plants, especially those in bogs and deep organic soils, but avoid breaking off roots, as they can extend 30 cm or deeper into the soil and will re-sprout.
- Never mow purple loosestrife, as the cut plant matter may re-root.
- Where plant digging isn't possible, removing flower heads will help slow the spread of seeds. Simply cut the head in mid-summer before the flower goes to seed. Remove and destroy the flowering head as outlined above.
- All work should be completed by mid-summer, before the flowers go to seed. Seed formation starts at the bottom of the flower and progresses to the tip. Before taking action, check to see that there are no ripe seeds. If any are present, and there is a chance that they may be spread, put the project on hold until the next year.
- Ensure all plant parts are removed, dried, and, if possible, burned. Plants can re-root from the tiniest piece of root, stalk, leaf, flower, seed head, or even bits dropped from a wheelbarrow. Place all plant matter in a carton or at a protected site so it can dry completely without being spread by wind, water, humans, or animals. When burning purple loosestrife, make sure all plant matter is destroyed. When packaging, wrap the plants securely in a plastic bag or container to avoid contamination at landfill sites. Before composting, make sure all matter is fully dried so that living remnants aren't spread to other gardens or landscaping sites.
- Inform others in your community about the purple loosestrife predicament and what they can do about it.

For additional resources visit:

CanadianWildlifeFederation.ca/Education