

School-to-Nature



Purple Loosestrife-Wildflower (Invasive)

Purple Loosestrife blooms in our area from July through September, seen often in roadside ditches or on the edges of ponds. It is an upright perennial wildflower that grows 2-5 feet tall, but can occasionally grow taller. The plant forms multiple delicate spikes of small bright magenta red/purple blossoms as you can see in the photos. Those flowers begin to form seeds by the end of September.



When Purple Loosestrife is in a moist area, it spreads rapidly, both by seeding and by rhizomes (underground sprouts formed by the roots) so that it can form a dense growth of plants. It can crowd out an area of other native plants, especially at the edge of a pond or lake, within a few years. For this reason, Purple Loosestrife is considered invasive and it is recommended to remove the plants that are growing in wet areas. You can do so by pulling out the young plants, by cutting off the flower heads to avoid seeding, and by cutting down or mowing the entire plant to the base to discourage growth. If you do any of these things, put the plant parts in a bag and place the bag in the garbage.



There is also a Loosestrife Beetle that can be used to help control these plants; you can see two of the small brown beetles at work, in the photo at the left. The Conservancy volunteers work hard annually removing this plant so that native plants can grow.

In folk medicine, crushed Purple Loosestrife leaves and flowers can be used as an antifungal resource and as an astringent to stop bleeding. The plant also has other medicinal uses when made into a syrup or ointment; information on this can be found online.

October 2022 DL

Caledonia Conservancy | P.O. Box 044714 | Racine, WI | 53404
262-498-4993 | www.CaledoniaConservancy.org