

## PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE

*Lythrum salicaria*



*Lythrum salicaria* (purple loosestrife) is a flowering plant belonging to the family Lythraceae. It should not be confused with other plants sharing the name loosestrife that are members of the family Primulaceae. Other names include spiked loosestrife, or purple lythrum.

The purple loosestrife has been introduced into temperate New Zealand and North America where it is now widely naturalised and officially listed in some controlling agents. **Infestations result in dramatic disruption in water flow in rivers and canals, and a sharp decline in biological diversity as native food and cover plant species, notably cattails, are completely crowded out, and the life cycles of organisms from waterfowl to amphibians to algae are affected.** A single plant may produce up to 2.7 million tiny seeds annually. Easily carried by wind and water, the seeds germinate in moist soils after overwintering. The plant can also sprout anew from pieces of root left in the soil or water. Once established, loosestrife stands are difficult and costly to remove by mechanical and chemical means.