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# Purple Loosestrife

*Lythrum salicaria*



A Purple loosestrife infestation in Chester Creek  
near Westchester Lagoon, Anchorage, AK.

Photo taken in Fall 2005 by Michael Shephard, USFS.



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Invasive Weed

# Invasive Weed

**Purple loosestrife is a noxious weed in thirty-four states, including Alaska.**

Purple loosestrife invades wetlands, river and stream banks, pond and lake shores, wet meadows and marshes, forming monocultures that:

- Are unsuitable for waterfowl nesting
- Out-competes native vegetation
- Slows water flow
- Degrades salmon habitat by increasing sedimentation and altering the food web



*Figure 1.* Loosestrife leaves and flowers thrive in wetland environments

Possibly mistaken as fireweed, loosestrife is differentiated from fireweed by a square stem and flowers that last into September and October.

Purple loosestrife invades natural areas with prolific seed production and through underground stems that spread up to 1 foot per year.



*Figure 2.* A square-shaped loosestrife stem

Purple loosestrife is sometimes planted in gardens from where it spreads to natural areas. Once established in natural areas, loosestrife is extremely difficult to remove, requiring several years of control and monitoring. Detecting and managing purple loosestrife early is crucial to prevent harm to locally abundant natural resources.

**Help prevent the spread of purple loosestrife.**

If you see this plant or want information on how to control it, please contact the UAF Cooperative Extension Service or the Division of Agriculture.

**UAF Cooperative Extension      907-786-6300**

**Division of Agriculture      907-745-8127**

**Report Sightings at [www.alaskainvasives.org](http://www.alaskainvasives.org)**

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*Figure 2, Steve Dewey, Utah State University, Bugwood.org*