

CENTRAL JERSEY INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM

Invasive Plant Fact Sheet

Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)



Family name: Loosestrife family (Lythraceae)

Native range: Eurasia

General: Herbaceous clump-forming perennial of 3 to 6 feet tall found in wet areas. Rootstock is extremely vigorous. Plant can be smooth or downy.

Leaves: Opposite or whorls of 3. Untoothed, lance-shaped and stalkless.

Flowers: Magenta to purple to pink-colored terminal spikes. Individual flowers have 5 to 7 petals. Flowers appear July through September.

Fruit: Capsules contain numerous reddish-brown seeds. One mature plant may produce an estimated 2.5 million seeds. Seeds ripen in October to December and remain viable for long periods of time.

Look-alikes: Winged loosestrife

(*Lythrum alatum*) is a native plant of wet habitats. It's leaves are *alternate except for those near the base*. It grows from *1 to 2.5 feet* tall. The pink flowers of winged loosestrife are *solitary in the upper leaf axils*.

Habitat: Wet meadows and fields, swamps, shores of rivers, streams, and ponds, ditches.

Threats to native habitats: Purple loosestrife forms dense stands that exclude native plants, which provide food and habitat for wildlife. Purple loosestrife can also infest shallow waterways so they are impassable for recreational and commercial use.



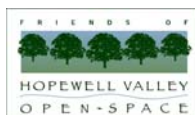
NJ Status: Purple loosestrife is widespread. It is *highly threatening* to natural plant communities. All newly detected occurrences should be eradicated.

Commercial Availability: Purple loosestrife is widely planted in landscaping and gardens.

Sources: <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/lysa1.htm>

<http://nbii-nin.ciesin.columbia.edu/ipane/icat/browse.do?specield=72>

Rhoads, A.F. and T. Block. 2007. *Plants of Pennsylvania*. 2nd ed. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA. p. 518-9.



Central Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (CJISST) is a regional cooperative effort to detect, map, and manage emerging populations of invasive species. This initiative is a partnership of state, county, and municipal agencies, conservation groups, and private citizens. To learn more, please contact us: **Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space**, (609) 730-1560, www.fohvos.org or **Upper Raritan Watershed Association**, (908) 234-1852, www.urwa.org.

