

# Know Your Nebraska Noxious Weeds

## **PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE** *Lythrum salicaria* L., including any cultivars and hybrids

Over generations both the rate of introduction and spread of noxious weeds have increased significantly. This change is mainly due to an increase in human travel, expanding commerce through trade, and a lack of knowledge of how weeds are spread. By becoming educated about noxious weeds, you're doing your part to help stop their spread and protect the environment.

### **What is the threat?**

If noxious weeds are left uncontrolled, the Nebraska that we enjoy today will look much different for future generations. Do your part, become educated and help stop the spread of noxious weeds.



### **How did purple loosestrife get here?**

[Purple loosestrife](#) is native to Eurasia. It is believed to have been introduced to the northeastern United States by European settlers in the early 1800s. Purple loosestrife was declared a noxious weed in Nebraska in 2001.

### **What does purple loosestrife look like?**

Purple loosestrife flowers have 6 rose-purple to magenta petals along a terminal spike. It has a 4-angled stem and leaves opposite. It is sometimes mistaken with other purple flowered plants including American germander and various vervain species. Click on this short [video](#) to learn how to identify purple loosestrife.

### **What is the impact of doing nothing?**

Purple loosestrife can have a major negative impact on native wetland habitats, resulting in reduced productivity of native plants and loss of biodiversity. Once loosestrife invades wetlands the natural habitat is out of balance and the productivity of native plant and animal communities is severely reduced. Loosestrife clogs waterways, reducing the amount of water available for irrigating crops. Recreational activities are affected reducing tourism revenues.

### **Is purple loosestrife good for anything?**

Purple loosestrife is an escaped ornamental. It is an excellent honey plant used by bees.

### **How does purple loosestrife spread?**

Purple loosestrife is a prolific seed producer and has a perennial root system (rhizome). In one season each plant can produce up to two million seeds, each of which can remain viable for many years. Seeds are spread by water, wind, birds, animals, and people.

### **How can I control purple loosestrife?**

Controlling small infestations is more effective and less expensive.

Options for [purple loosestrife](#) control include:

**Mechanical** - Pulling and digging plants can be effective for small areas.

**Herbicide** - Many herbicides are effective in managing purple loosestrife.

**Biological** - Several insects have been introduced from Europe, including the root weevil, two beetles and flower feeding weevils. Biological agents are considered a tool and should not be relied on to eradicate an infestation.

### **What is a Noxious Weed?**

*A noxious weed is a nonnative plant, which is known to be invasive and can be directly poisonous to man, livestock, and wildlife. Noxious weeds compete with crops, rangeland and pastures reducing yields substantially.*

*It is the duty of each person who owns or controls land in Nebraska to effectively control noxious weeds on his/her property. For more information about Nebraska's Noxious Weeds contact your local [Weed Control Superintendent](#)*