

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE



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REPORT FORM

TYPES OF AREA

- Marsh or Wetland Pond or Lake
 Stream or River Meadow or Pasture
 Roadside Ditch Canal Urban

PLANT DENSITY

(estimate of plants/square metre)

- Fewer than 20 20-99
 100-999 >1000

AREA ESTIMATE _____

LOCATION

County or Municipality _____

Township _____

Nearest Town _____

Distance from town _____

Private Land Crown Land Other

SURVEY DATE

Date of Survey _____/_____/_____

Have you reported this area? Yes No

If "yes" When? _____/_____/_____

Has the area increased? Yes No

REPORTER

Name _____

Address _____

City/Town/RR _____

Province _____

Postal Code _____

Please fill out one form for each area surveyed.

Canadian Wildlife Federation

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THE INVADER

Purple loosestrife invades wetlands and gradually takes them over. The weed ultimately chokes out all native vegetation, creating a dense purple landscape almost totally devoid of wildlife. Purple loosestrife came from Europe over a century ago. Its unrelenting spread across North America was aided by the absence of native predators.

In Canada, there are no herbicides registered for use against purple loosestrife growing in or close to water. Biological controls have only recently been approved and it may be some time before there are adequate supplies of these insects for widespread use. Large scale wetland infestations are best left until environmentally safe control methods are readily available. Location and size of all sites should be documented NOW with the Purple Loosestrife Report Form so they can be dealt with swiftly once control methods are in place.

Many concerned individuals and groups want immediate action. They want to do whatever they can TODAY to stop the spread of purple loosestrife into more wetland areas. Their actions are being focused on small stands of the weed in parks, natural settings and at home.

REMOVAL

The entire plant must be removed to minimize the chance for regrowth. Dig out the root mass, making sure you have removed ALL pieces. The roots extend 30 cm (1 foot) or deeper into the soil. Grass or alternative flora may be planted or the area can be allowed to return to native vegetation.

Place ALL plant matter in a carton or a protected site so it can dry completely without danger of being spread by wind, water, human or animal activity.

Once totally dried, the plant matter can be burned, packaged for disposal or composted. When burning, make sure all plant matter is destroyed. When packaging, wrap securely in a plastic bag or container to avoid contamination at land fill sites. When composting, make sure all matter is totally dried first so living material isn't spread to other garden or landscaping sites.

Purple loosestrife will re-root from the tiniest piece of root, stalk, leaf, flower, seedhead or even bits dropped from the wheelbarrow. Also, dormant seeds may germinate because of soil disturbance during removal activity! For these reasons, it's important to work carefully and keep site disturbance to an absolute minimum.

All work should be completed by mid-summer BEFORE the flowers begin to go to seed. Seed formation starts at the bottom of the flower and progresses to the tip. Before taking action, check to see that no ripe seeds are present. If there are and there is a chance of spreading the seed, put the project on hold until next year.

Monitor the site for several years. New shoots may come up from root remnants. This new growth should be dealt with quickly.

FLOWER REMOVAL

A single plant is capable of producing 2.7 million seeds per year. Each seed can lay dormant for ten years or longer before germinating. Where plant digging isn't feasible, flower head removal helps retard the spread of the seed. Simply cut the head in mid-summer BEFORE the flower sets seed. Remove and destroy the flowering head as outlined in REMOVAL.

OTHER CONTROLS

In plain and simple terms, purple loosestrife is one tough plant. It is a deep-rooted perennial that spreads like wildfire. No magical solution is immediately available, but some practical ones are on the horizon. A variety of techniques and tools will be needed to bring this exotic plant under control. Bio-controls and herbicides are two options which hold real promise. But the bottom line is that any control method must be environmentally acceptable.

A number of herbicides have proven effective in dry land control of loosestrife, but are still un-registered for that use. Registration procedures for these applications are underway. Initial research on herbicides now being tested in aquatic situations suggest an effective control is possible there too. However, this research is in the formative stage and it will be some time before an aquatic herbicide is registered.

While herbicides are used to "eradicate" weeds, biological agents are used to "control" them. They reduce weed densities to the degree that their impact on other species is minimized. Biological control is the most efficient and economical long term means of dealing with large infestations. Work is progressing with a number of European insects which have historically kept this plant under control on that continent. Three of these insects were recently approved for release in Canada.

Quick and effective use of biological and chemical control measures will only be possible in those areas where there is good documentation of infested sites. That's why it's important that every site be documented with a Purple Loosestrife Report Form sent to the Canadian Wildlife Federation. Sites can also be reported by calling 1-800-565-6305.

ALTERNATE PLANTINGS

For years, it was felt that commercially available hybrid cultivars (Morden Pink, Morden Rose, Morden Gleam and Dropmore Purple) were sterile and thus unable to produce viable seed. However, recent research shows some of these domestic varieties can, in fact, cross-pollinate with wild strains and thus cause further spread. If you have purple loosestrife on your property and wish to replace it with an alternate plant, follow the steps outlined in this brochure.

The Canadian Nursery Trades Association and local outlets have been quick to respond to the purple loosestrife challenge. Landscapers and home gardeners are now offered a wide variety of alternate perennial plants which pose no threat to the environment. The following is just a small sampling of what's available. See your local nursery or garden centre for details on purple loosestrife replacements.

SPIKED SPEEDWELL

This mid-summer flowering perennial has blue, spike-shaped blossoms and grows to a height of a foot and a half. It does well in full sun, but also tolerates partial shade.



LILIES

There are a wide variety of lilies with a vast range of colors. Different varieties flower from early summer to late fall and may grow as tall as six feet.



SIBERIAN IRIS

This perennial stands two feet tall and flowers through late spring and early summer with white, blue and purple blossoms. It requires a sunny to partly shady site.



SPIKED GAYFEATHER

This five foot tall native of eastern Canada has pink, purple and white blossoms from mid-summer to early fall. It requires full sunlight to partial shade.



GARDEN SAGE

This summer blossoming plant features flowers which are violet to blue. It is drought tolerant, likes full sunlight and grows from a foot and a half up to three feet tall.



PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE

FEATURES



**Height - 3 to 6 feet
(1-2 meters)**

**Stalk - square, woody,
several stalks
per plant**

**Leaves- smooth edges,
opposite sides of
stalk, attached
directly to stalk**

**Flowers-long pink/
purple spike,
June to Sept.**

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