

# Purple Loosestrife

## *Lythrum salicaria*



# Huron Pines

### Identification:

**Appearance:** Purple loosestrife is a perennial herb native to Eurasia. At one time it was a widely used ornamental because of its beautiful showy flowers.

**Stem:** Distinctly four sided. Larger plants can have multiple stems and appear woody with a fine downy hair covering them. Plants can grow up to 6 ft. tall.

**Flower:** Numerous bright magenta flowers with 5 to 7 petals each. Flowers bloom July to October.

**Distribution:** Found in wet areas and prefers disturbed soil of any type. Prolific seed producer, but can also reproduce from cut stems and sections of root stock.



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### Control Methods:

**Mechanical:** Seedlings can be hand pulled. Larger plants need to be dug out to ensure the entire tap root is removed. Flower and seed heads can also be removed, make sure to bag and properly dispose of any plant material to reduced spreading.

**Chemical:** Herbicide treatment after peak bloom can be effective (late August). **Permits are usually required for herbicide use in or around water bodies; contact Huron Pines or the DEQ for more information.**

**Biological:** *Galerucella* beetles (pictured above) are effective biocontrol and widely distributed to large stands. As the purple loosestrife stand's population decreases the beetle colony will die off.

### Ecological Effects:

- Decreases native vegetation that provides higher quality food and habitat for birds and mammals
- Can alter a wetland's structure and function
- Forms a dense monoculture

