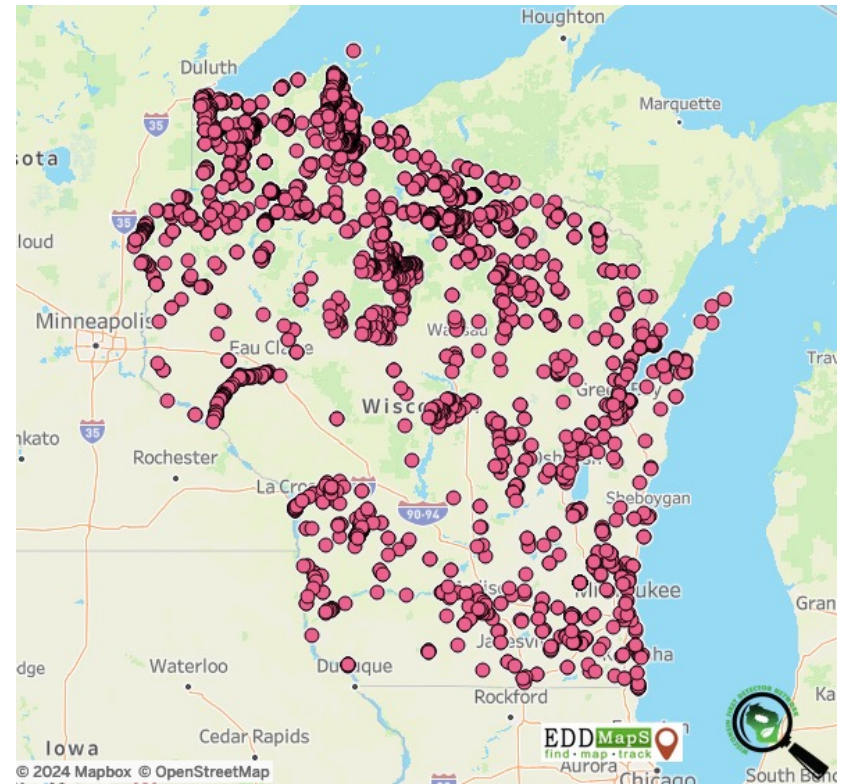


# Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)



- Large, bushy wetland plant with showy purple flowers on wand-like branches
- Habitats it invades:
  - Wetlands
  - Roadsides
- Status
  - Wisconsin: Restricted
  - Regulated in: IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, MO, OH







# Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)

*Leaves opposite, simple*



- 3-4" long, lance-shaped, without petioles
- Leaf margins entire, finely hairy
- Leaves may be alternate in upper parts of the stems







# Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)

## *Flower/fruit*

- Flowers bright purple, with six petals
- Sepals, petals, and stamens fused into an elongated tube (hypanthium)
- Stamens and styles of differing lengths in different flowers
- Fruit is a tube-shaped capsule



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# Purple loosestrife look alike

Many wetland and wet prairie plants look like purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) including blue vervain (*Verbena hastata*) (N), swamp loosestrife (*Decodon verticillatus*) (N), winged loosestrife (*Lythrum alatum*) (N), fireweed (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*) (N), and blazing-stars (*Liatris* spp.) (N).



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**BLUE VERVAIN** (*Verbena hastata*) (N) has small **bluish** flowers with **five fused petals**. Its leaves are opposite, **roughly hairy** and **coarsely toothed**.



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**SWAMP LOOSESTRIFE** (*Decodon verticillatus*) (N) has flowers borne in the axils of its **whorled** leaves. **Leaves and stems are hairless**. The stems **arch over** and root into the soil.



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**WINGED LOOSESTRIFE** (*Lythrum alatum*) (N) has flowers **solitary** in the axils of its leaves. The **leaves, bracts, and floral tubes are smooth**. Petals are **less than 7mm long**.





# Purple loosestrife look alike

Many wetland and wet prairie plants look like purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) including blue vervain (*Verbena hastata*) (N), swamp loosestrife (*Decodon verticillatus*) (N), winged loosestrife (*Lythrum alatum*) (N), fireweed (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*) (N), and blazing-stars (*Liatris* spp.) (N).



2002 © Peter M. Dziuk

**FIREWEED** (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*) (N) has flowers with **four petals** and **inferior ovaries**, and **alternate leaves**. It usually does not grow in wetlands.



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**BLAZING-STARS** (*Liatris* spp.) (N) have **small flowers held in tight heads** in a terminal inflorescence. The leaves are **narrow and alternate**.



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# Purple loosestrife look alike



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The **invasive** wanded loosestrife (*Lythrum virgatum*) is listed as Prohibited in Wisconsin but has not been discovered here yet.

It is very difficult to tell apart from purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and the two are known to hybridize.

Wanded loosestrife has **leaf blades lanceolate to narrowly linear**, the **bases attenuate (tapered)**; the plants are **hairless**.

