



Assiniboine River, Winnipeg

Alternative Plant Choices

The gardening industry has been quick to respond to the purple loosestrife challenge. Many environmentally-friendly perennial plant choices are now available. The following is a sample of plants recommended for growing in western Canada. See your local nursery or garden centre for more details.

Spiked Gayfeather, Blazing Star

This 1.5 m (5 ft.) native of eastern Canada has pink, purple and white blossoms from mid-summer to early fall. It requires full sunlight to partial shade.



Little Princess

This compact 38 cm (15 in.) native mallow has soft frilly flowers and blooms in July and August. It requires full sun to partial shade.



Additional Information

For more information visit our Web site at:
www.purpleloosestrife.org
or contact the Manitoba Purple Loosestrife Project
204-467-3269

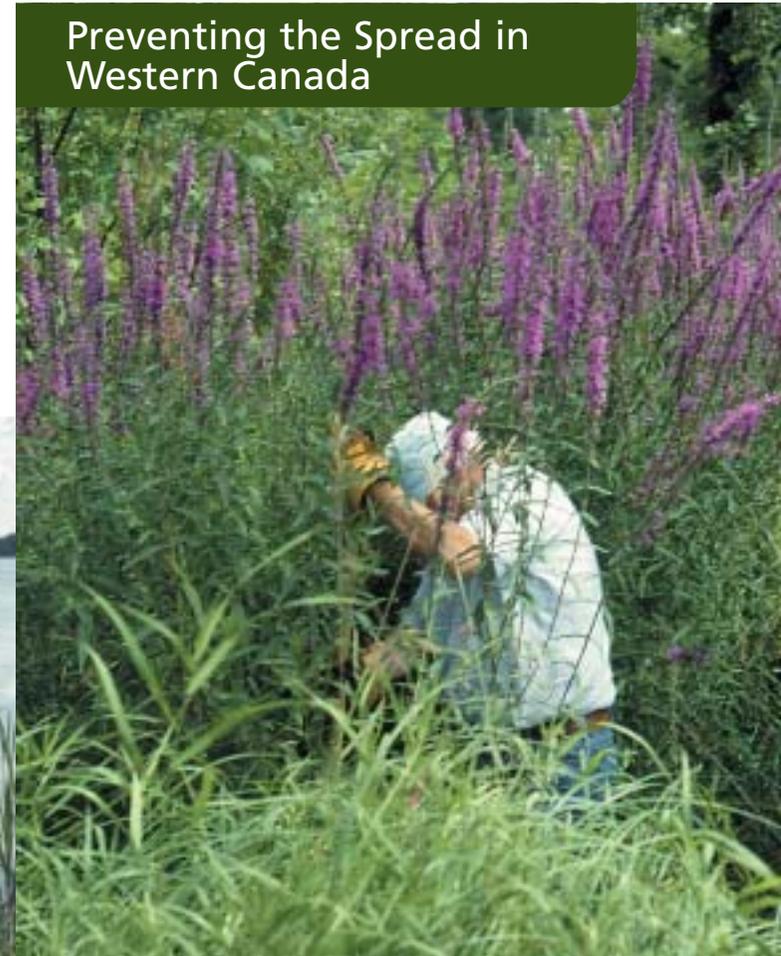
The Manitoba Purple Loosestrife Project is a partnership of the following organizations:

- Environment Canada – Canadian Wildlife Service
- Manitoba Conservation
- City of Winnipeg
- Ducks Unlimited Canada
- Delta Waterfowl Foundation
- Manitoba Naturalists Society
- Manitoba Weed Supervisors Association
- T & T Seeds

Crescent Lake, Portage la Prairie



Purple Loosestrife





Netley-Libau Marsh

The wetlands of western Canada are facing a serious threat – damage caused by the spread of an invasive plant, purple loosestrife. In the wild, purple loosestrife (also called *Lythrum*) invades and destroys habitat along rivers, streams, lakes, ditches and wetlands. It creates a dense purple landscape that chokes out native plants and deters wildlife.

Purple loosestrife is not native to Canada. In fact, it was introduced from Europe. Purple loosestrife planted in gardens and yards produce seeds that invade the wetland areas. To help stop this noxious weed, you are encouraged to remove and destroy existing *Lythrum* plants. Common garden varieties of *Lythrum* include Dropmore Purple, Morden Pink, Morden Gleam and Morden Rose. The sale of *Lythrum* varieties is prohibited in some provinces, including Manitoba.

Identifying Purple Loosestrife

Look for a plant one or two metres tall. It has smooth-edged leaves on a four-sided square stalk. There are several stalks per plant. The flowers bloom from June to September on long, pink/purple spikes.

Removing Purple Loosestrife in Wetland Areas

Large purple loosestrife infestations in wetland areas are not easy to remove. Herbicides cannot be used in or near wetland areas. Digging up these infestations is very labour intensive and increases the risk of spreading the seeds. Therefore, a different approach must be taken.

In Canada and the United States, specialized leaf-eating beetles from Europe are controlling purple loosestrife. These beetles do not eat any other plants and are a safe alternative to using chemicals. This is an example of biological control. The beetle has successfully controlled large areas of purple loosestrife allowing for the return of native plants such as sedges and cattail.



Biological control beetle *Galerucella calmariensis*



Removing Purple Loosestrife from Gardens

In gardens, your purple loosestrife should be removed by mid-summer, before the flowers go to seed. Make sure the entire root mass, and all pieces, are removed. Remember, roots can extend 30 cm (12 in.) or deeper into the soil.

Place all plant material in a carton to dry completely. Protect it from wind, water, human or animal activity. Once completely dried and dead, it can be burned or bagged for disposal. If burning, ensure that all plant matter is destroyed. If bagging, double-bagging is recommended. Wrap plant securely in two dark plastic bags or a container to avoid contamination at landfill sites.

Purple loosestrife can easily re-establish from small pieces of root, stalk or seeds. Make certain that no trace of the plant remains in the soil. Frequently re-inspect the site for new shoots that may grow. Once cleared, the site can be replanted with grass or other perennial flowers.

Netley-Libau Marsh – Before biocontrol



After biocontrol