

Purple Loosestrife

Lythrum salicaria

Plants · In flower Jun–Aug



Photo by Ivar Leidus, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

A tall, handsome perennial of wet ground with square stems, narrow willow-like leaves and long dense spikes of star-shaped magenta-purple flowers. Purple loosestrife grows along riverbanks, ditches, fen and loch margins around Dumfries and is one of the most striking waterside plants of high summer.

BEHAVIOUR

The species has three distinct flower forms, differing in the relative lengths of styles and stamens, and successful pollination requires pollen to move between different forms — a system Darwin studied closely. It is a superb nectar source for bees and butterflies. Introduced to North America, it became a serious invasive there, which is a useful reminder that 'invasive' is about place, not species.

WHEN TO SEE IT

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Loosestrifes (Lythraceae)
HEIGHT	60–150 cm
STATUS	Native; common on wet ground

Photo by Ivar Leidus, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Natureville