



Report this pest



Purple loosestrife

Why is it a pest?

Purple loosestrife is a highly invasive perennial herb that outcompetes native vegetation, disrupts water flow, and can degrade habitats for wildlife, particularly wetland birds.

This plant can block access to waterways, impact irrigation systems, and reduce the quality of hay and pasture due to its unpleasant taste. It produces many seeds, with each plant capable of producing 2.5 million of these annually. Seeds can be dispersed by wind, water and contaminated machinery, making it difficult to control once established.

Purple loosestrife is locally established in Ōamaru, with scattered populations in Tapanui and Dunedin. It is found in a few locations across the region, primarily in wetland and riparian habitats.



What does it look like?

- **Size:** Purple loosestrife can grow up to 3 metres tall.
- **Leaves:** Narrow, opposite one another, and less than 12 centimetres long.
- **Flower/seeds:** Tall, dense spikes of purple or pink flowers that bloom from December to February. A single plant can produce up to 2.5 million small, blackish seed capsules each year.
- **Root system:** A thick, central taproot anchors the plant deeply in the soil with many smaller fibrous side roots spreading outward near the surface that form thick mats. These dense root systems can send up dozens of tall stems from a single base, helping the plant spread and crowd out other vegetation.
- **Habitat:** Thrives in wet or damp soils, often in still or slow-moving waterbodies, wetlands, riverbanks, lake shores and drainage systems.

Common name:

Purple loosestrife

Scientific name:

Lythrum salicaria

Management programme:

Unwanted organism

An unwanted organism is not managed under the ORC Regional Pest Management Plan but may be controlled as part of our Biosecurity Strategy.



**Report
this pest!**

If you have seen or suspect the presence of this pest, you **must report** the sighting to us at orc.govt.nz/reportpests

When can I spot it best?

Purple loosestrife is most visible when it flowers from December to February.

What are the rules?

Purple loosestrife is declared an unwanted organism in the National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA). Any species declared a pest under the NPPA cannot be sold or be in a place where plants are being sold.

Pest plants cannot be propagated, bred, multiplied, communicated, released, caused to be released, or otherwise spread.

What should I do?

Do not attempt to undertake control of purple loosestrife yourself. Report any sightings to Otago Regional Council.



Report this pest



Help us find purple loosestrife

You must notify Otago Regional Council if you suspect the presence of this pest.

If you think you've seen it:



Note the location



Take a photo
(if possible)



Report this pest
at orc.govt.nz/reportpests

For more information, visit orc.govt.nz/purpleloosestrife

