invasive WEED

Purple Loosestrife *(Lythrum salicaria)*

Also known as spiked loosestrife, rainbow weed, purple lythrum, and salicaire.
Listed as a noxious weed in Oregon and 44 other states. It is unlawful to sell purple loosestrife in Oregon.

courtesy of Eric Coombs, OR Dept of Agriculture

Threat: Grows aggressively in wet areas, crowding out all other plants • Dense growth traps sediments, allowing the plant to extend into open water • Provides very little food or shelter value for wildlife.

Description: Semi-woody perennial herb with a strong taproot • Stems are square, leaves are lance-shaped • Pretty flowers occur in spikes at the ends of stalks • Flowers generally magenta in color, but can be light pink or white • Blooming begins in July and continues through September • Prefers wet areas such as ponds or wetlands.

History: Native to Eurasia • Introduced to the Willamette Valley as an ornamental.

Spread: Non-sterile varieties can produce 1,000,000 highly viable seeds per plant each year • Sterile varieties will spread via roots • Plant will resprout from stem pieces or root fragments, such as may be left behind after a manual removal effort • Seeds spread by wind and water.

Control: Current methods to eradicate large infestations of purple loosestrife have not been effective • Best control method is elimination of small populations before they expand, by seeking out small flowering patches during July and August and removing them entirely, followed by yearly monitoring and additional treatment • Mechanical methods do not work well for large populations since the root mass is so dense that digging it out means removing the entire soil block • For large areas, biological controls and/or herbicide are the best options • Contact your county weed agency for help in controlling this weed.

Alternatives: Pacific ninebark and Douglas spirea are native shrubs that like full sun and wet soil. Consult your local nursery for appropriate non-invasive alternatives.

For More Information:
Oregon Dept of Agriculture- www.oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT/WEEDS/docs/weed_policy.pdf
National Park Service- www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/list/a.htm
The Nature Conservancy- http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/esadocs/lythsali.html

Pull together

4 COUNTY
Cooperative Weed Management Area

Prepared by Julie Reilly, Natural Resources Department of Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District, as a project for the Clackamas, Clark, Multnomah, and Washington Counties Cooperative Weed Management Area.
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