



Yachats Weed of the Month - September

Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)

Impact: Purple loosestrife is a plant from Europe that has spread and degraded temperate North American wetlands since the early nineteenth century. Loosestrife suppresses the native wetland plant community and can ultimately alter the wetland's structure and function. Large monotypic stands of loosestrife also impact fish and wildlife by eliminating natural foods and cover. Irrigation systems may also be affected. In Yachats, loosestrife has escaped from gardens and established itself in ditches at the south end of Yachats Ocean Road, as well as the wetland area of the Yachats Community Park, behind the Commons.

Identification: Purple loosestrife is a hardy perennial that is most easily identified by its upright racemes of closely-spaced purple flowers, shown in the picture. The leaves usually occur in pairs, opposite to each other on the upright stem. A mature loosestrife rootstock may have up to 50 separate shoots. Here in Yachats it is easily confused with fireweed, which is more plentiful and flowers at about the same time. Fireweed flowers are less purple, and pinker in color than loosestrife.



Management: Once a big infestation of loosestrife develops it is difficult to eradicate. Small stands of loosestrife can be dug out, care being taken to remove as much root as possible. Cutting the plants at ground level can will reduce seed production and will eventually weaken the plant. Chemical and biological (insect) methods have also been used to control this weed. Insects that feed on loosestrife have been released in Yachats, but with limited effect.

Contact information: Call Wally at 541 547 5474 if you have any questions. For Yachats' invasive plants web page, go to www.yachats.info/YIPS

"Yachats Weed of the Month" is an informational service of the Yachats Trails Committee and YIPS! - the Yachats Invasive Plants Subcommittee.