

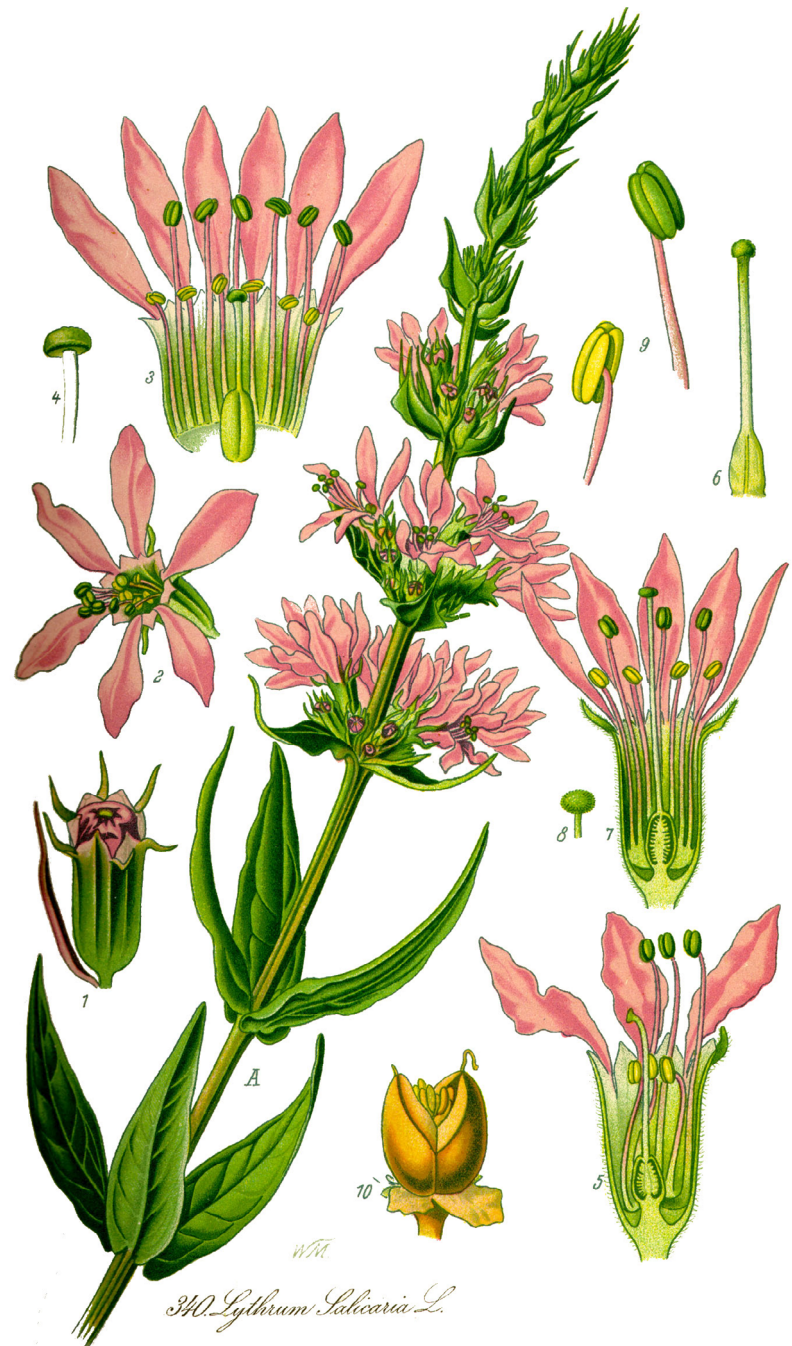
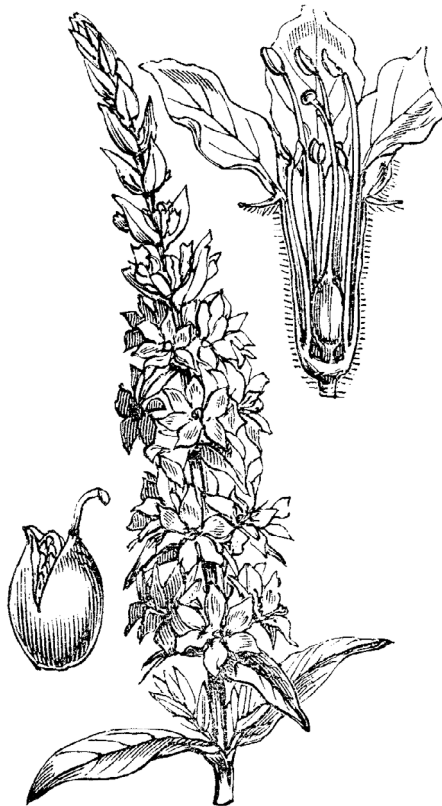
A close-up photograph of Purple Loosestrife flowers. The flowers are a vibrant magenta color and are covered in numerous small, clear dew droplets. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green. A black rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title and scientific name in white text.

# Purple Loosestrife

*Lythrum salicaria*

# Background

- Native to Europe and Asia
- Initially introduced in the 1830s, on ballast of ships, also as a medicinal herb
- Often a garden escapee
- Nicknames include: “beautiful killer”, “marsh monster”, “spiked loosestrife”





# Characteristics



- 6-10' tall, 5' wide
- Rigid 4-6 sided stems, grows in a clump of up to 30 stems
- Leaves opposite or whorled, 2-6" long, simple, smooth edged, no petioles
- Flowers magenta, 5-7 petals; clustered tightly in axils (1-2 flowers attach above each pair leaves)
- Autumn leaves may turn red
- Jul-Sept
- Wet soil



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## Harmfulness

- Regulated class B noxious weed
- Grows in lakes, wetlands, meadows marshes, ponds, roadside ditches, anywhere that's wet
- Each plant eventually dispersing up to 2.5 -3 million seeds
- Small light and easily dispersed by wind
- Seeds have high viability, almost 100% germination rate and remain viable under soil or water for years
- Can also be carried around by animals, on clothing or vehicles and in flowing water
- Can also spread vegetatively by pieces of stems or roots
- Becomes a monoculture, outcompetes natives, reduces biodiversity, clogs waterways, irrigation canals



# Lookalikes



## 1 Douglas Spirea *spiraea douglasii*

- 3-7'
- Shrub-like
- Stems/branches: brown, not square
- leaves alternate, simple, oblong, serrate or toothed above middle, 4-10 x 1-2.5cm, dark green top, whitish below
- Flowers deep pink, crowded in panicle 5-30 cm long pyramidal to oblong, appear powdery from stamens; flowers turn brown after bloom
- Jun-Aug

## 2 Fireweed *Chamerion angustifolium*

- Up to 6'
- Not clumping
- Stems: reddish, not square
- Leaves : alternate, elongate
- Flowers: terminal spike of rosy purple, 4 petals, 1" across
- Seeds have tufts of hair in slender pods
- Sun-loving in burned out forests





# Lookalikes (Cont'd)

## 3 Canada Germander *Teucrium canadense*



- 1.5-3' x 1.5-3'
- Stems: square, unbranched, stout hollow hairy
- Leaves: opposite, at right angle to leaves below, 5x2", rounded at base, taper to tip, hairy and coarsely serrated; often cluster of small leaves in axils
- Flowers: terminal spike of white, pink, lavender; irregular with one upper lip and lower lip 2 lobed, flowers stalked
- Native Americans used to make medicinal tea
- Jun-Aug
- Wet soil

## 4 Blue Vervain *Verbena hastata*

- 2-6' x 1-2'
- Stems: square, green, reddish with white hairs; Plant upright with multiple stems
- Leaves: opposite, short petioles, 6x1" lance-shaped, coarsely toothed, prominent veins
- Flowers: Candelabra-like inflorescences of pencil like spikes, tiny tubular, 5-lobed, densely packed purplish-blue flowers
- Jul-Aug
- Wet soil





# Lookalikes (Cont'd)

## 5 Blazing Star *Liatris spicata*

- 2-6' x .75-1.5'
- Leaves: basal grass-like leaves up to 12" long
- Flowers: terminal spike; aster flower has only fluffy disc flowers not ray flowers, red/purple
- Jul-Aug
- Wet soil

