



Whatcom Weeds

Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board 322 N. Commercial St Bellingham WA 98225
(360) 778-6234 www.whatcomcounty.us/914/Weeds

GARDEN LOOSESTRIFE

Lysimachia vulgaris

THREAT: Garden loosestrife, also called yellow loosestrife, is a native of Eurasia. It was introduced to North America as a garden ornamental. It invades wetland areas, spreading by seeds and rhizomes. Along the shores of Lake Sammamish, garden loosestrife appears to be outcompeting purple loosestrife, another notorious invader of wetlands. In Whatcom County, garden loosestrife is present in Basin 1 and Basin 2 of Lake Whatcom.

DESCRIPTION: Garden loosestrife is a perennial that may grow to over a meter. It has softly hairy stems and leaves, the leaves occurring on the stem in an opposite or whorled arrangement. The leaves are lance-shaped to oval-shaped, 3 to 4 ½ inches long, and are dotted with small black or red glands. Garden loosestrife has rhizomatous roots, which allow a single plant to spread quickly. The rhizomes can stretch across the water surface for up to 15 feet from the plant. Passing watercraft can sever the rhizomes allowing them to float to another location and grow new plants. The flowers are bright yellow and occur in a cluster at the top of the stem. The flowers each have five petals and the calyx has reddish-brown margins. Garden loosestrife prefers moist habitats, such as edges of wetlands, and is shade tolerant. It may also be found in gardens, planted as an ornamental.



MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: Small infestations of garden loosestrife may be hand dug, if care is taken to remove all roots. At some small sites, a covering of black plastic has been used to suppress plants. Contact the noxious weed control board for more information or visit the Board's website at <http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/930/Noxious-Weed-Fact-Sheets> for the publication: "Control Options for Garden Loosestrife"