

# *Lythrum salicaria*



**FAMILY:** LYTHRACEAE

**BOTANICAL NAME:** *Lythrum salicaria*, L.,  
*Sp. Pl.* 1: 446 (1753)

**COMMON NAME:** Purple loosestrife

**COMMONWEALTH STATUS:** (*EPBC Act*)  
Not Listed

**TASMANIAN STATUS:** (*TSP Act*) vulnerable

*Lythrum salicaria*. R. Schahinger.

## Description

An erect perennial herb between 50 –100 cm high, with a thickened rootstock and short, hard tuberous roots. The aerial stem is stout and usually sparingly branched. **Leaves:** The leaves are arranged oppositely along the stem and measure between 2-7 cm long. They are lance-shaped, pointed at the tip, stalkless and slightly clasping to the stem. **Flowers:** The flowers are deep pink to purple, approximately 8 mm long and tubular, with 5-6 petals. They are clustered in leafy bracts and borne in long spikes at the ends of the stems. Flowering occurs from spring to autumn. **Fruit:** The fruit is a two-celled capsule enclosed in the basal tube of the flower (description from Cunningham *et al.* 1992, Curtis & Morris 1975). Herbarium specimens have been collected from January to March.

## Distribution and Habitat

This species occurs throughout temperate Australia and inhabits swamps, stream banks and rivers in the north and north-east of the State. It is also found between gaps in *Melaleuca ericifolia* forest (Curtis & Morris 1975, R. Schahinger pers. comm.).

## Key Sites and Populations

A key site for this species is the West Tamar Fitness Trail, which contains between 200-300 individual plants (R. Schahinger pers. comm.).

## Known Reserves

Reserved in Kimberley Thermal Springs State Reserve and the Trevallyn State Recreation Area (Kirkpatrick *et al.* 1991).

## Ecology and Management

This species can reproduce vegetatively and may be bird dispersed. Hardy genetic strains of *Lythrum salicaria* are often found in commercial nurseries (R. Glazik pers. comm.). This species has also been found in disturbed areas such as roadsides. The populations may not be native as *Lythrum salicaria* has weedy potential.

## Conservation Status Assessment

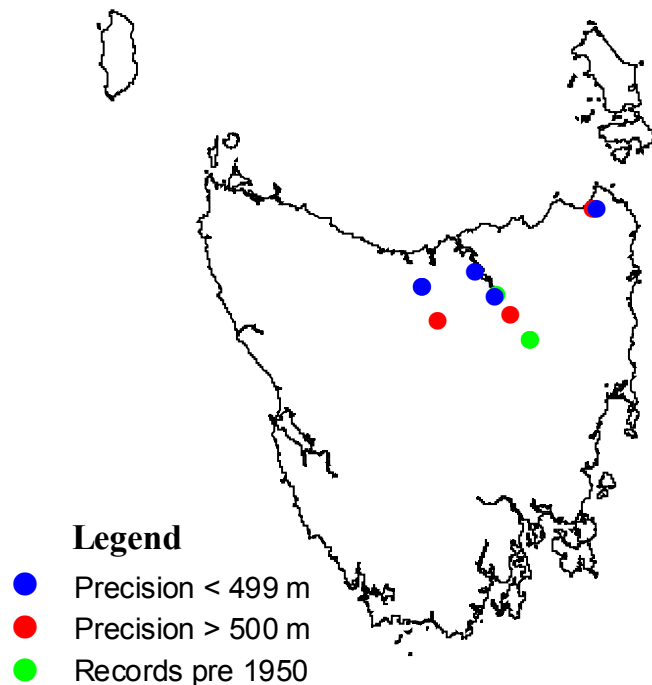
There is no immediate need for reassessment of *Lythrum salicaria*. Weedy and native populations need to be identified.

## Further Information

- Cunningham, GM, Mulham, W, Milthorpe, P & Leigh, J 1992, *Plants of Western New South Wales*, Inkata Press, Sydney.
- Curtis, WM & Morris, DI 1975, *The Student's Flora of Tasmania*, Part 1, Government Printer, Hobart.
- Kirkpatrick, JB, Barker, P, Brown, MJ, Harris, S & Mackie, R 1994, *The Reservation Status of Tasmanian Vascular Plant Communities*, Tasmanian Conservation Trust Incorporated, Hobart.

## Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species Unit records, September 2002)



## 1:25 000 Map Sheets

Cleveland, Exeter, Launceston, Longford, Montana, Musselroe, Sheffield, Tomahawk.

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