Lythrum hyssopifolia

**COMMON NAME**
Hyssop loosestrife

**FAMILY**
Lythraceae

**AUTHORITY**
Lythrum hyssopifolia L.

**FLORA CATEGORY**
Vascular – Exotic

**STRUCTURAL CLASS**
Dicotyledonous Herbs other than Composites

**NVS CODE**
LYTHYS

**CONSERVATION STATUS**
Not assessed

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION**
Low growing, many branched herb with narrow leaves, either in pairs or individual up to 2.5 cm long, and small (4 mm across) pink flowers produced directly from the stem next to the upper leaves.

**DISTRIBUTION**
Common throughout both islands as far south as Otago

**HABITAT**
Wet disturbed places such as roadside gravel and exposed margins of water bodies.

**FEATURES**
Glabrous annual with diffuse or dense habit; stems to c. 40 cm tall, ± quadrangular, often pinkish, sometimes producing roots towards the base. Lvs sessile or subsessile, (6)-8-25 × (1.5)-2-8 mm, usually linear or narrow-linear, sometimes linear-oblong on lower part of main stem and on young plants, entire; base rounded to subcordate; apex acute or obtuse. Fls solitary in lf axils, monomorphic. Pedicels < 1.5 mm long; bracteoles > pedicels. Calyx 3-5.5 mm long; tube narrow-obconic and tapering gradually to narrow base, ribbed; lobes 1-1.5 mm long, narrow-triangular to linear-subulate; epicalyx segments 0.5-0.8 mm long, broad-triangular. Petals 6, 2.5-4 mm long, pink, crumpled; claw short; limb elliptic-obovate. Stamens (3)-4-7-(10), included; filaments generally of different lengths. Style 1-2.5 mm long. Capsule 4-6 mm long, cylindric, included in calyx tube. Seed 0.7-1 mm long, ovoid, slightly asymmetric.

**SIMILAR TAXA**
Similar to rose loosestrife (Lythrum junceum), but all parts of that plant are larger.

**FLOWERING**
Summer

**FLOWER COLOURS**
Red/Pink

**FRUITING**
Autumn
LIFE CYCLE
Seed dispersed by water, animals or contaminated machinery.

YEAR NATURALISED
1855

ORIGIN
Europe, western Asia and North Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION
Unknown, seed or soil contaminant

CONTROL TECHNIQUES
Not controlled in New Zealand.

ATTRIBUTION
Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description from Webb et al. (1988).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

MORE INFORMATION