

# Galerucella

Invasive to Maine

Galerucella Beetle  
Loosestrife Leaf Beetle

Upland  
Fields, Wetlands, Developed Areas

## Adult Form



Mark Schwarzaender, U. Idaho, Bugwood.org



Look for small (4 to 6 mm) light brown beetles. In the spring overwintering adults emerge from plant litter and soil to feed on new foliage at the top of loosestrife plants.

## Habitat



Jil M. Swearingen, USDI NPS, Bugwood.org



Galerucella beetles almost exclusively eat purple loosestrife. Look for a "shothole" feeding pattern (1-2 mm holes eaten through leaves), especially at the top of loosestrife plants.

## Life Cycle Description

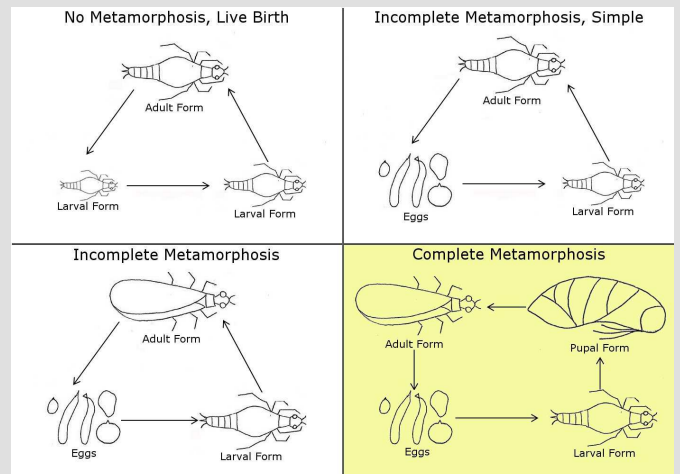


B. Blosssey: Cornell, L. Wilson: Idaho, Bugwood.org



Adults mate in the spring and females lay eggs. Larvae hatch in early summer, feed on the host plant, and move down plant stems into plant litter or soil to pupate.

## Life Cycle Diagram



## Larval Form



Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Bugwood.org



Look for tiny caterpillars on loosestrife plants with black heads and yellowish bodies. Larvae feed on the underside of leaves causing a "window-pane" effect.

## Similar Species

There are two *Galerucella* beetles in the U.S., *Galerucella calmariensis* and *Galerucella pusilla*. They are hard to tell apart, as they look similar and both eat loosestrife. *G. pusilla* may have a thin dark stripe on its thorax and *G. calmariensis* has a black triangle or a broad, dark stripe on its thorax.

## Fun Fact

In some states *Galerucella* beetles are used as biological control agents of purple loosestrife. People raise *Galerucella* beetles and release them in areas with purple loosestrife plants. Within 3 to 5 years the beetles can reduce the health and growth of purple loosestrife in an area.

Researched and created by: Rebecca Martin

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