

plant). Terminating the tall stem is a distinctly **convex to strongly domed inflorescence of pale pink flower heads, the individual heads composed of 3-7 florets with corollas 5 mm long or less.**

E. purpureum (green-stemmed Joe-pye-weed) is a common Joe-pye-weed most likely to be confused with *E. fistulosum*, based on its size and similarly domed inflorescence, but can be distinguished by its greenish stems (these are sometimes purplish at the nodes) with solid pitch and leaves that are usually 3-5 per whorl. *E. maculatum* is an extremely common and widespread Joe-pye-weed that is usually much smaller than *E. fistulosum* and is distinguished by its flat-topped inflorescence, strongly purple-spotted stems, and flower heads with more florets.

Best survey time/phenology: This large Joe-pye-weed is a robust, distinctive plant but is best sought when in flower or fruit, from approximately early August through October.

FQI Coefficient and Wetland Category: 10, OBL

Habitat: In Berrien County *E. fistulosum* was discovered in low areas along a highway, landward from coastal high dunes along Lake Michigan, where it was associated with such species as *Acer rubrum* (red maple), *Aster lateriflorus* (side-flowering aster), *Sambucus canadensis* (elderberry), *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* (red ash), *Glyceria striata* (fowl manna grass), *Impatiens capensis* (impatiens), *Solidago gigantea* (late goldenrod), *Ulmus americana* (American elm), and other common wetland plants. Elsewhere in Michigan this species occurs in similar low ground along roads bordering wetlands, whereas in Lenawee County it was collected on a “seeping hillside”, and in Oakland County it occurred on the edge of a wet meadow/shrub carr adjacent to a fen. Elsewhere in its range it occurs in a wide variety of wetland habitats, including wet lowlands, floodplain woods, along streams, wet meadows, bogs, and marshes in both open sun and partial shade (Flora of North America (2006).

Biology: Little is known about the life history of this robust perennial species. It is reported to be an important pollen and nectar plant for insects, and is also known and planted for attracting butterflies such as the yellow swallowtail and other species.

Conservation/management: There are few known threats to this species, although its occurrence along highways suggests that it may be vulnerable to road maintenance activities. In the Allegan County locality, it occurs in a rural area along an unpaved road where there is a high degree of off-road-vehicle (ORV) use, yet it does not appear to have sustained any impacts. This species generally occurs in wetlands where there is poor access for ORVs and other traffic, and thus it is buffered by its natural habitats.

Comments: Owing to its vigorous, robust habit as well as its ability to attract butterflies, this colorful perennial is highly valued as an ornamental species and is offered in many nursery catalogues.

Research needs: A primary need at the present time is inventory to reliably determine the status of this species in Michigan. Records in both southwestern and southeastern Lower Michigan indicate that this species potentially occurs throughout southern Lower Michigan, as its habitat does not appear to be specialized, and it thus may be overlooked by botanists and others.

Related abstracts: Southern wet meadow, American bittern, Blanding’s turtle, eastern massasauga, marsh wren, Mitchell’s satyr butterfly, northern harrier, short-eared owl, spotted turtle, small white lady’s slipper.

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Abstract citation:

Penskar, M.R. 2009. Special Plant Abstract for
Eupatorium fistulosum (hollow-stemmed
Joe-pye-weed). Michigan Natural Features
Inventory, Lansing, MI. 3 pp.

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Funding for abstract provided by Michigan Department of
Transportation.

