

## Dense Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata*)

### Status

Dense Blazing Star is listed as a threatened species and receives protection in Ontario under the *Endangered Species, 2007 (ESA)* and in Canada under the federal *Species at Risk Act (SARA)*. Protection prohibits actions such as killing, harming, possessing, selling or trading of the plant.

### Description

Dense Blazing Star is a perennial forb with a low clump of numerous, grassy looking leaves leading up to tall spikes of flowers. The leaves are spirally arranged with the lower leaves being 10 to 40 centimetres (cm) long by 5 to 20 millimetres (mm) wide while the upper leaves are reduced in size. The tall spike-like stems are single or in clusters and are 60 to 200 cm in height. The flowering stalks are densely spike shaped with 4 to 18 sessile and crowded flowering heads. Flowers bloom beginning in mid-summer and are usually purple, but can occasionally be white.<sup>i</sup>

### Distribution

Dense blazing star occurs from New York to Florida, and westward to the Mississippi.<sup>ii</sup> In southwestern Ontario, dense blazing star is at the limit of its northern range.<sup>iii</sup> In Canada, dense blazing star occurs naturally in southwestern Ontario, particularly along Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River. Populations of this species are documented in five counties including Essex, Chatham-Kent, Lambton, Middlesex and Elgin, although they are more concentrated at Walpole Island in Lambton County and within the Windsor area in Essex County.<sup>iv</sup>

### Habitat

Dense Blazing Star is predominately found in sandy plains, shores, marshy meadows, wet prairies, fens, swamps, mucky swales, marly shores, roadsides, railroads, fields and other open places, and rarely in openings of savannahs and woodlands. It prefers to grow in full sun within moist upland sites or along the water's edge in full sun.<sup>v</sup>



i - v - URS Corporation and LGL Limited. 2009. Dense Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata*) Impact Assessment Report for the Detroit International River Crossing Study.