



AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES In The Chain! OF THE MONTH!

July 2011

Prevention is essential to curb the spread!



Purple Loosestrife

**Please Be Our Eyes
For New Sites!**

*Best Detected when blooming in late July and early August. Plants have angular stems, usually opposite pairs of leaves, and multiple magenta flower spikes. Best controlled by biological control, *Galerucella weevils*, which are propagated and then released in July.*

Description

- Hardy perennial found in moist soil: wetlands, stream/river banks, lake shores, and disturbed areas
- Established plants tolerate dry conditions: roadsides, ditches, and fields
- 3-9 foot tall with **angular** stalks
- Lance shaped, 1-4" leaves usually on **opposite sides**, with each pair at 90° angle
- Magenta flowers with 5-6 petals and a yellow center on numerous long spikes
- Seeds smaller than pin head; easily transported
- Dense root mats several feet across
- Introduced by European settlers in the 1800's for garden use



Life History

- Each flowering plant releases 2.7 million seeds annually that remain viable in the soil for years!
- Can establish from bits of root or broken stem fragments
- Water drawdowns accelerate spread by providing open substrate and sun for seed germination

Why Is It A Problem?

- Quickly spreads, outcompeting and shading out native plants
- Wildlife and fish decline significantly through reduction of habitat and food sources: Baltimore butterflies, marsh wrens, black terns, pied-billed grebes, and least bitterns disappear completely

- Alters decomposition rates and nutrient cycling
- Wetlands store and filter less water
- Thick growth impedes boat travel
- Encroaches on agricultural fields

What Can Be Done?

First Steps!

1. Identify locations while blooming in late July and report
2. Cut/ bag flower heads before they put out seed to prevent spread (dispose of properly)

Biological Control Methods

- Best method & long-term
- *Galerucella* weevils feed exclusively on loosestrife
- Eat leaves & shoots, weaken plants and reduce flowering
- Propagated and released through a citizen action program in WI
- Beetles reduce loosestrife by 80-90%



Chemical and Mechanical Methods

- Require follow-up and impractical/ expensive on large sites. Burn plants or place in landfill but do NOT compost. Do not disturb seed bank.
- Gently pull or dig young, unestablished plants: roots must come out intact
 - Apply approved herbicide in dry, upland areas on private property on individual plants by selective hand spraying. DNR permit required near or in the water. Some chemicals are non-selective and effect native plants.

Note: DNR permits are required for chemical treatments, mechanical treatments, some manual treatments, biological control, bottom screening, and buoy/barrier placement.