
Purple Loosestrife
The Good
The Bad &
The Ugly

How it came to the US in 1880's

- As an ornamental
- For medicinal purposes
  - contains tannins and salicarin
  - diarrhea, swelling, and drying agent
- From ships using soil as ballast

Origins

- Common throughout Eurasia
- Kept in check as plants, animals, insects and disease co-evolved with it.
- Became a source of food and shelter for the ecosystem.

Today purple loosestrife threatens our wetlands, marshes, and waterways.

- Spreads rapidly in moist areas
- Left unchecked, creates monocultures that crowd and shade out native wetland plants
- Impedes boat traffic, obstructs hikers and fishermen

MOST IMPORTANTLY IT CAN

change watercourses, leading to erosion, siltation and clog drainage systems.

PLS's Power

- After the flowers have bloomed, each plant develops hundreds of small sharp-pointed capsules
- Each capsule contains thousands of seeds
- A single plant can produce up to 2.5 million seeds

The PS takeover of SE and W MI

Many methods of control were considered

- Chemical
- Mechanical
- Biological

Biological Warfare Won!

- Three beetle types first introduced in 1994
- Literally ate their way out of house and home
- They have not yet adapted to another plant
- Eradication is not possible – but controllable


Galerucella beetles feeding

Addressing PLS in ERCOL

- Present in Grass and Intermediate Rivers
- Hand removal can be effective for our small infestations -

Remove flower heads by cutting

Apply herbicide to plant

Disposal of heads

Become a Loosestrife Hunter!

More info at

3lakes.com