Foliage

Flowers

Seeds (left) and Fruit (right)

Jan Feb March April May June July Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec

1

2

Management Techniques

1. (All year) Hand pulling. Done before the plant flowers, so that seed does not accidentally get spread. Make sure to get the entire root. Bag the plant so that no fragments can re-sprout. It is best to burn the pulled plants to get rid of them. *This technique works best if followed a month later with technique 2.*
2. (Mid-Summer until late into the growing season) Herbicide application. Is most effective if applied right when plant begins to flower. Cut the stem 1-2 feet from the ground, and use a hand sprayer for application of herbicide. A second spray later in the growing season can improve effectiveness. These sprays should only be used as spot treatments and not broadcast over a large area. It is recommended that only 25% of each plant should be covered in herbicide. Choose ONE of the following herbicides:
   - A. 5% triclopyr solution approved for aquatic conditions (selective for broadleaf plants, only use if temp. is between 30°F and 80°F)
   - B. 3% glyphosate solution approved for aquatic conditions (if temp. is between 40°F and 80°F) (**Important Note: Glyphosate is non-selective, avoid contacting non-target plants)

******Do NOT mow or leave pulled plants on site. Cut fragments can take root.******

For More Information Visit:

http://www.HawkeyeCWMA.org

ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW PESTICIDE LABELS.

Proper training for prescribed fires is highly recommended.

Basic training can be found online at http://training.nwcg.gov/courses/s130.html and http://training.nwcg.gov/courses/s190.html

Related Websites:

http://www.iowadnr.com/forestry/invasive.html
http://plants.usda.gov
www.invasivespecies.gov
www.nps.gov/plants/alien

Credits:

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The **Hawkeye Cooperative Weed Management Area (HCWMA)** is a collective group of county, state, and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations and community associations who have come together to **combat the invasive species problem in Eastern Iowa**. The HCWMA serves Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Louisa Counties and is open to all interested parties. The Term CWMA, or Cooperative Weed Management Area, refers to a local organization that integrates invasive species management resources across jurisdictional boundaries in order to benefit entire regions.

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Purple Loosestrife

Lythrum salicaria

A Serious Threat
To
Iowa's Wetlands

What is Purple Loosestrife?

- A wetland perennial herb.
- Was introduced from Europe in the 1800's as a medicinal herb, a nectar plant for honey bees, and a garden plant.
- Quickly spread into natural areas.
- Can now be found in most temperate parts of the United States and Canada.

A wetland infested with Purple Loosestrife

What is the threat to Iowa?

- Can rapidly spread through wetlands, out-competing native plants.
- Mature plants can produce over 2 million seeds each year.
- Seeds remain viable for up to 20 years in soil.
- Floods, boats, and animals carry seeds to new locations.
- Threatens wildlife that depend on native plants for food and habitat.
- Is still promoted by some horticulturists for landscaping and by beekeepers for it's nectar.

What does Purple Loosestrife Look Like?

Identifying traits: Stands between 3 and 7 feet tall. Has a four sided stem, green to purple in color. Produces showy purple flowers on long spikes that bloom from July to September.

Leaves:

Leaves are simple and usually opposite, though they can be found alternate and whorled. They are long, narrow, hairy, and have smooth edges. Leaves are without petioles.

Flowers:

Pink or purple flowers are found closely attached to the stem. They appear in a spike-like, upright formation. They bloom starting with the bottom of the flower spike in early July, and bloom up to the top of the spike in September.

Seeds:

The main means of reproduction is through seeds. Each stem of the plant can produce between 100,000 to 300,000 seeds every year. This creates a large seed bank that remains viable for up to 20 years. While totally submerged in water, seeds can remain viable for 20 months. Can hybridize with native loosestrife.

Roots:

This plant can also reproduce through the spread of rhizomes. Roots are large, woody, and spread quickly.

Purple Loosestrife planted ornamentally

Native Alternatives:

Prairie Blazing Star (Liatris pycnostachya)-

This native perennial herb was once found in the prairies that dominated Iowa's landscape. It produces showy purple flower-spikes that bloom in late summer. Prairie Blazing Star can reach up to 5 feet tall. It can be used for prairie restoration, wildlife habitat and food, and landscaping.

Cardinal Flower (Lobelia cardinalis)-

Hummingbirds and humans alike are attracted to this vibrant red wildflower. It is grown best in moist soils and partial sun. It blooms in the late summer. It can easily be spotted in stream banks and wet ditches.

What is the Difference Between Purple Loosestrife and Native Wing-angled Loosestrife?

Similarities:

This native herbaceous perennial (Lythrum alatum) is very similar to Purple Loosestrife. It is upright, with a square stem, and a purple to pink flower-spike on the top. It flowers from June to September. Also like Purple Loosestrife, it prefers full sun and wet to moist soils.

Differences:

This native variety only grows up to 3 feet tall. The stems differ in that the native variety is winged. Solitary flowers can be found in the leaf axils. The lower leaves are paired and the upper leaves are alternate. Unlike Purple Loosestrife, the leaves are hairless.

Wing-angled Loosestrife (*Lythrum alatum*)