DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP'S
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

INVASIVE PLANT OF THE MONTH

AUGUST

https://www.wildlifetrusts.org

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE

Lythrum salicaria L.

HISTORY & IDENTIFICATION

- Introduced from Europe and Asia during the early 1800s as a contaminant of European ship ballasts and as a medicinal herb
- Aggressive wetland invader with a woody taproot
- Produces clusters of many 3'-10' stems
- Stems are stiff, square and leaves are opposite or whorled, lance-shaped

LIFE CYCLE & GROWTH HABIT

- Grows in wet, open, sunny areas. Habitat includes wet meadows or fields, stream and riverbanks, ponds, lakes and wet ditches
- Herbaceous hardy upright perennial
- Rose purple flower spikes bloom from July to September
- Spreads through high production of seeds with a mature plant producing over 1-2 million seeds
- Seeds remain viable for many years and easily spread by water, wind, animals and human's shoes

Invasive.org

PREVENTION & MANAGEMENT

- Don't plant purple loosestrife, including all Lythrum varieties
- Remove pioneering plants for isolated small colonies
- Rinse off equipment, gear, clothing and footwear used in infested areas
- Cut off flower heads, bag and destroy them and repeat through flowering season

MECHANICAL

- Remove by hand for small clusters, bag and destroy
- Dig older plants and remove all roots
- Avoid excessive soil disturbance and do not mow

NATIVE ALTERNATIVES

Swamp Milkweed
Asclepias incarnata

New England Aster
Aster novae-angliae

Blue Vervain
Verbena hastata

RESOURCES

https://extension.psu.edu/purple-loosestrife-in-pennsylvania

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ct/technical/ecoscience/invasive/?cid=nrcs142p2_011126

http://nyis.info/invasive_species/purple-loosestrife/

Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants by C. Colson Burrell, Brooklyn Botanic Garden All-Region Guide, 2007, pp.173-177