

Dear Cullen Lakes property owner,

This is just a reminder that it is time to start checking your shoreline for the invasive species purple loosestrife. If it is present along your shoreline, you are responsible for getting rid of it. The lake association no longer has the monetary or physical resources to do it for you. There are several ways to eradicate or at least control this beautiful but invasive perennial plant, including pulling or digging the plant and root system out of the ground. For more information visit the Minnesota DNR web site or do an internet search on ways to eradicate/control purple loosestrife. Attached are a photo and a diagram of purple loosestrife to help you identify the plant.

The CLA Invasive Species Committee



## DESCRIPTION FOR PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE (*Lythrum salicaria*)

### WHEN TO LOOK FOR IT:

Mid-July through the end of August when it is in bloom and easily recognized.

### WHERE TO LOOK FOR IT:

It is present on wet soils to shallow standing water; wet meadows, pasture wetlands, cattail marshes, stream and river banks, lake shores and ditches.

### WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

**Growth Habit:** Upright hardy perennial, bushy, up to 7 feet tall.

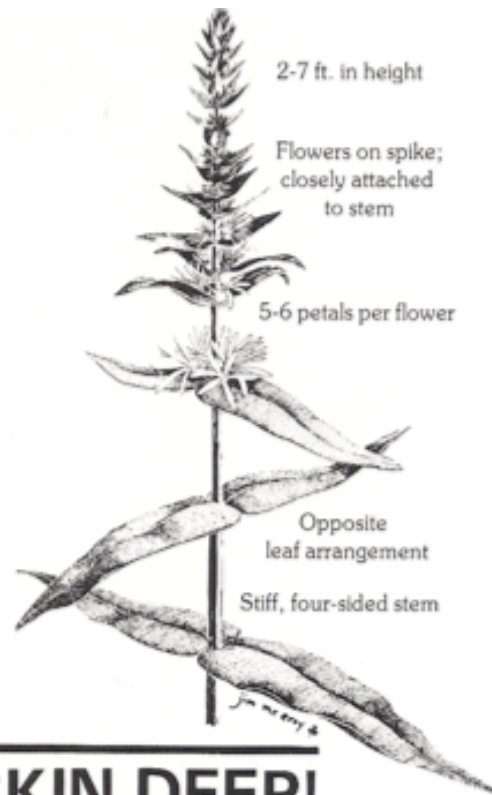
**Flowers:** Purple-magenta color. Flowers numerous on a long spike; 5-6 petals per flower.

**Leaves:** Vary, although usually opposite; linear shape and smooth edges. Attached directly (no stalk) to a four-sided stem.

**Roots:** Woody taproot with fibrous root system that forms a dense mat.

### HOW IT SPREADS:

It is a prolific seed producer; also grows from underground root and sprouts from broken-off plant parts.



# BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP!

The attractive plumage of purple loosestrife conceals its menacing nature.

## WHAT IS PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE?

Purple loosestrife is an aquatic plant that is gaining a foothold in Minnesota. The plant is widely distributed in the northeastern United States, and over the past five years loosestrife has increased significantly in Minnesota. You may have seen the plant's magenta flowers which are strikingly evident throughout July and August.

This hardy perennial has been introduced from Europe. Because of its exotic origin, loosestrife has left behind all of its natural enemies and multiplies with no checks or balances in North America.

## WHAT IS THE MAJOR IMPACT?

The plant aggressively crowds out the vegetation required by wildlife, while having no value for wildlife itself.

For example, songbirds do not make use of the small hard seed. Muskrat require cattail to build their homes and they show a preference for cattail over loosestrife for food. Waterfowl, especially ducks, shun wetlands that have become dominated by loosestrife. In addition, overall waterfowl production is decreased as habitat is eliminated. Finally, the plant's growth is generally too compact to offer cover, and cover may be as crucial to wildlife as food.