

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE

Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) is a **highly invasive perennial** with showy purple flowers arranged on flower spikes. Leaves are lance-shaped and arranged on a square stem. It is found rooted in a wide range of wet soil habitats. It can grow in a couple of feet of water or on dry shore near the water line.

Purple loosestrife spreads primarily by seeds and a mature plant can produce as many as 2.7 million seeds annually.

Adverse impacts include:

- Dense growth along shoreland areas makes it difficult to access open water.
- It overtakes habitat and outcompetes native aquatic plants, potentially lowering diversity.
- Provides unsuitable shelter, food, and nesting habitat for native animals.
- Dense root systems change the hydrology of wetlands.

Management of purple loosestrife involves either mechanical removal of plants or application of herbicides:

- **Mechanical control** can be done using hand-held equipment like a shovel or weed puller, but is labor intensive for large stands. Hand removal is recommended when dealing with individual plants or very small stands. Mowing is not recommended as plants will likely re-sprout and seeds may be spread. Plants should be bagged in plastic bags for disposal.
- **Herbicide control** can be done using glyphosate herbicides. Licensed applicators are required if treatment is to be conducted on or near water.

The licensed applicator for the Tri-Lakes – PLM Lake and Land Management – will be conducting a survey of the Tri-Lakes and noting location of purple loosestrife along channels and in common areas. Plants on private property cannot be treated by PLM UNLESS the property owner signs a waiver. The waiver can be found on the Tri-Lakes website www.thetrilakes.org at the bottom of the “Contact Us” page. Email or fax the signed waiver to the Tri-Lakes Association website, or mail it to PO Box 235, Mecosta, MI 49332.