

## PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE

*This summer we have received a number of calls relating to the status and control of Purple Loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria). The following information is adapted from literature prepared by the Department of Natural Resources' Purple Loosestrife Program. In addition, they have published an excellent color brochure to aid in the identification of purple loosestrife. There is also color pictures of loosestrife look-alikes so that accurate identification can be made. The brochure can be obtained by writing to:*

**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
Purple Loosestrife Program  
Ecological Services Section  
Division of Fish and Wildlife  
Box 25  
500 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155**

or contacting your regional DNR office:

MN Dept. of Natural Resources  
2115 Birchmont Beach Road NE  
Bernidji, MN 56601

MN Dept. of Natural Resources  
1201 East Highway 2  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

MN Dept. of Natural Resources  
Box 756  
Highway 15 South  
New Ulm, MN 56073

MN Dept. of Natural Resources  
Box 648  
424 Front Street  
Brainerd, MN 56401

MN Dept. of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 6247  
Rochester, MN 55903

MN Dept. of Natural Resources  
1200 Warner Road  
St. Paul, MN 55106

There are three species of loosestrife, or LYTHRUM, of interest to horticulturists: Purple Loosestrife, (Lythrum salicaria) and wand lythrum (Lythrum virgatum) are of European origin; winged loosestrife (Lythrum alatum) is native to Minnesota but is relatively uncommon. It is typically found in undisturbed marshes, meadows and prairies.

Growers have grown and sold both European species (L. salicaria and L. virgatum) and many hybrids and cultivars throughout North America. Garden Lythrum in North America have parentage of one, two, or in some cases all three Lythrum species. Some hybrids and cultivars of L. virgatum do produce seed. According to taxonomists, identification of Lythrum hybrids and cultivars is very difficult if not impossible.

The widespread distribution of escaped or naturalized Lythrum has produced some startling examples of nature out of balance. Purple loosestrife is a phenomenally prolific exotic when not kept in check by its natural European predators. In Minnesota, it has spread to over 800 sites, blocking drainage ditches, clogging marshes, and degrading habitat used by waterfowl, songbirds, furbearers and other animals and plants. Over 20,000 acres of wetlands are now covered with loosestrife.

In 1987, the species Lythrum salicaria was designated a noxious weed by the commissioner of agriculture. The



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noxious weed law and 1987 legislation prohibit the sale and transport of *Lythrum salicaria* (purple loosestrife) in Minnesota.

In November of 1988, Commissioner of Agriculture Jim Nichols deemed purple loosestrife (Latin names *Lythrum salicaria* and *Lythrum virgatum* and any combination thereof) to be a noxious weed as defined in Minnesota Statutes 1987, section 18.171, subdivision 5. This new order supercedes the 1987 commissioner's order; therefore, the sale of ALL these plants is now prohibited.

Illegal *Lythrum* plants have many horticultural names:

Plants of *L. virgatum*  
parentage:

Rose Queen  
The Rocket  
Morden Pink  
Morden Rose  
Dropmore Purple  
Columbia Pink

Plants of *L. salicaria*  
parentage:

The Beacon  
Fire Candle  
Bightness  
Lady Sackville  
Mr. Robert, Robert's  
Roseum Superbum  
Happy  
Atropurpureum  
var. Tomentosum  
Purple Sprire

According to Minnesota Statutes, 1975, it is the duty of the occupant of privately owned land (or, if unoccupied, the owner) or the person in charge of public land to control or destroy noxious weeds to prevent their spread.

**[18.182] Penalty for the Sale of Purple Loosestrife:** *A person who sells purple loosestrife, *Lythrum salicaria*, is guilty of a misdemeanor.*

**[86.78] Control of Purple Loosestrife:**  
Subdivision 1. Definition: *For the purpose of this section, "purple loosestrife" means *Lythrum salicaria*.*

Subdivision 2. Establishment of Control Program: *The commissioner of natural resources shall coordinate a control program to curb the growth of purple loosestrife. The commissioners of agriculture and transportation must aid and cooperate with the commissioner of natural resources to establish, implement and enforce the control program.*

**[Purple Loosestrife]**

*\$50,000 is appropriate from the general fund to the commissioner of agriculture, to be available until June 30, 1989, for the eradication of purple*

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*loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria) on farm land where the farmer is required to eradicate the purple loosestrife because of the noxious weed law.*

**[18.191] Destruction of Noxious Weeds**

This section now provides that effective July 1, 1989, an owner of non-federal lands underlying public waters or wetlands is not required to control purple loosestrife below the ordinary high water level of the water or wetland. The commissioner of natural resources is responsible for the control on public waters and wetlands unless they are owned or managed by the federal government. This section also provides that DNR employees or those under contract with the DNR may cross private land to get to public waters or wetlands to control the purple loosestrife. Landowners may assume responsibility for controlling loosestrife on their protected waters if they notify the DNR in writing.



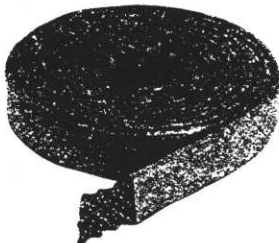
**OFF THE TOP  
OF MY HEAD**

**GREG HUBBARD, CGCS  
Editorial Chairman**

In an earlier issue, I suggested that we all take some time off during the busy golf season to relieve work related stress and to re-acquaint ourselves with our families. For once, I finally took some of my own advice and took a little visit to the PGA Championship held this last August at Kemper Lakes near Chicago. By showing my GCSAA membership card, my wife and I were each given complimentary passes for each day of play which also included special tent privileges for food and refreshments. As evidenced by the TV telecast, we were treated to an outstanding golf course in superb condition and, of course, were eyeball to eyeball with the best golfers in the world. A thrilling finish topped off a very enjoyable visit and I returned to work a much happier soldier with my batteries fully recharged.

Besides the actual tournament, I was struck by the enor-

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