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# PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE ALERT!!!

**Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), an invasive, non-native plant, has been found in Middle Pond and Hamblin Pond.**

This plant is pretty to look at, colorful to see, but can easily take over lakeshores, wetlands, or cranberry bogs by crowding out native plants such as cattails, sedges, bulrush, and ferns. This is a big problem for our local birds, mammals, butterflies, and amphibians that depend on native plants for food and shelter. **A single mature plant can produce up to 2.7 million seeds annually** that can be widely dispersed.



*Emory Anderson finds purple loosestrife in Turtle Cove on Middle Pond.*



*Eric Holzman, Stephen Holzman, and Jake Penn pointing to a purple loosestrife plant on a Hamblin Pond beach.*



*A considerable stand of purple loosestrife on the southwest shore of Hamblin Pond. There are also numerous plants on the Town-owned property at the south end of Hamblin Pond near the public beach.*

## HOW TO IDENTIFY PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE

**Individual flowers have five or six pink-purple petals surrounding small, yellow centers.** Each flower spike is made up of many individual flowers.

**As flowers begin to drop off, capsules containing many tiny seeds appear in their place.** Plants may go to seed as early as late July.

**Each mature plant can produce up to 2.7 million seeds annually.** As tiny as grains of sand, seeds are easily spread by water, wind, wildlife and humans. Germination can occur the following season, but seeds may lay dormant for several years before sprouting.

**Leaves are downy, with smooth edges.** They are usually arranged opposite each other in pairs which alternate down the stalk at 90 degree angles, however, they may appear in groups of three.

**Stalks are square** (but can be five- or six-sided), woody, as tall as 8 ft, with several stalks on mature plants. Rootstocks on mature plants are extensive and can send out up to 30 to 50 shoots, creating a dense web which chokes out other plant life.



## WHAT IF WE IGNORE THE PROBLEM?

If left to grow in our aquatic environments, purple loosestrife will quickly take over. Below are photos taken ten years apart at the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in New York showing how this invasive plant completely replaced the native plants. More locally, Long Pond in Centerville and Oyster Pond in Woods Hole have major problems with purple loosestrife to the point where eradication efforts are necessary.

June 1968



August 1978



## WHAT CAN WE DO?

According to Rob Gatewood, Town Conservation Division, permission to remove purple loosestrife plants needs to be given by the Town Conservation Commission. Filing is now in process for such a permit and approval is expected by mid September. Volunteers will be needed to help remove the plants. Instructions will be provided on the proper procedures to be used in pulling and disposing of the plants. The Indian Ponds Association will work closely with the Town Conservation Division on this matter and will keep residents informed.

*Information and photos used above taken from [www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/1999/loosstrf/loosstrf.htm](http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/1999/loosstrf/loosstrf.htm), [www.seagrant.umn.edu/exotics/purple.html](http://www.seagrant.umn.edu/exotics/purple.html), [www.ppru.cornell.edu/weeds/images/purple-loosestrife.png](http://www.ppru.cornell.edu/weeds/images/purple-loosestrife.png), and [www.mass.gov/dcr/waterSupply/lakepond/aquatic\\_species.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/waterSupply/lakepond/aquatic_species.pdf).*