

Purple Loosestrife – How You Can Help

Most of us have seen it growing in road side ditches or along wetlands. Some of us may have even planted it on our property. Purple Loosestrife - a brightly flowered plant that is very aggressive and can degrade a wetland's habitat quality by crowding out native wetland plants. This is just one of the many plant and animal invasive species that are impacting our natural resources. Unlike most of the other invasive species, however, this is one that you can help control.



As a recent example, representatives from the Cadillac District of the Department of Environmental Quality's Land and Water Management Division worked with Meijer to address Purple Loosestrife that was taking over a mitigation area that they had created near their store in Traverse City. Meijer voluntarily agreed to create a program to control the spread of the plant by non-chemical means. They determined that using a plant feeding beetle, *Galerucella* sp. would be the most effective method to control the plant's growth.



In an effort to involve the community and to spread awareness of the damaging impact of Purple Loosestrife, Meijers worked with the Boy Scouts of America Scenic Trails Council (BSA), Northwestern Michigan College (NMC), the Great Lakes Water Studies Institute (GLWSI) and King & MacGregor Environmental to conduct the beetle release on May 24, 2007, and provide ongoing training and monitoring to study the effectiveness of the beetle project.

If you are interested in additional information about Purple Loosestrife, where it has been identified as a problem, and steps you can take to participate in a program to control its spread, the Michigan Sea Grant Program has a series of web "purple pages" to get you started. The information can be found at www.miseagrant.umich.edu/pp/index.html.