Invasive Species Alert

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE

(IMPATIENS GLANDULIFERA)

RESTRICTED IN MICHIGAN

IDENTIFICATION:

- Perennial herb with a woody, square stem covered in downy hair.
- Height varies from 4 to 10 feet.
- Leaves are arranged in pairs or whorls.
- Magenta flower spikes with 5-7 petals per flower are present for most of the summer.

HABITAT: Purple loosestrife thrives along roadsides and in wetlands. While seeds can germinate in water, establishment is much more successful in moist substrate that's not flooded. It prefers full sun but can tolerate shade.

NATIVE RANGE: Europe and Asia.

U.S. DISTRIBUTION: Purple loosestrife has been introduced to every state except Florida.

LOCAL CONCERN: Given the right conditions, purple loosestrife can rapidly establish and replace native vegetation. This can lead to a reduction in plant diversity, which reduces habitat value to wildlife.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Purple lythrum, rainbow weed, salicaria, spiked loosestrife.

REPORT THIS SPECIES: Visit MISIN.MSU.edu or download the MISIN smartphone app and report it from your phone.

Photos courtesy of Linda Wilson, University of Idaho, Bugwood.org (top) and John D. Byrd, Mississippi State University, Bugwood.org (bottom).