

Purple Plague!

America's Most WANTED

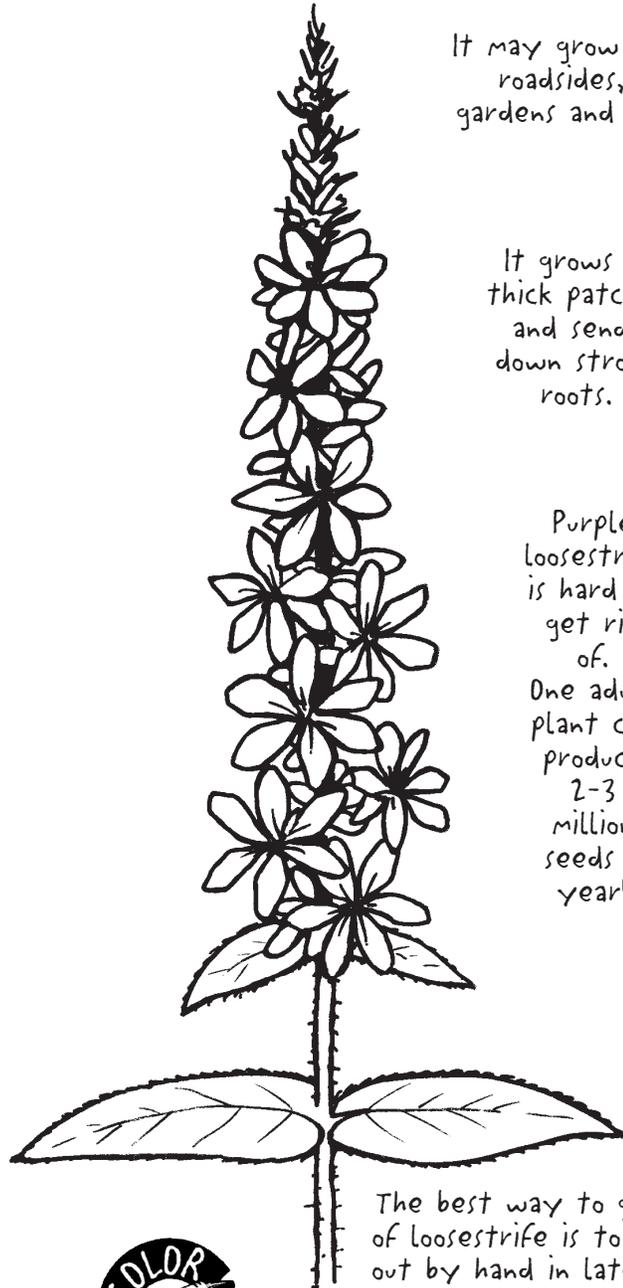
Purple loosestrife is pretty—and pretty dangerous. Why? This weed hogs the land and crowds out native plants and wildlife. It causes trouble when it grows in wetlands. The stems and roots are so tough that boats and wildlife can't get through. Other plant life can't survive where purple loosestrife takes over. Then wetland animals lose their food and shelter.

When purple loosestrife was brought to North America, its natural enemies were left behind. With nothing to stop it, the plants spread like wildfire. Now something's bugging purple loosestrife. Experts brought natural insect enemies from Europe to eat the plants. These beetles can slow purple loosestrife's spread.



People have increased the spread of purple loosestrife by planting it in gardens and by using it as a pollen source for honey bees. Have you seen purple loosestrife in a garden near you?

Did You Know?



It may grow along roadsides, in gardens and parks.

It grows in thick patches and sends down strong roots.

Purple loosestrife is hard to get rid of. One adult plant can produce 2-3 million seeds a year!



The best way to get rid of loosestrife is to pull it out by hand in late June, July, and early August, before the plant has gone to seed.

Unscramble the words to see the only states where purple loosestrife does NOT grow!

O R A D F I L A W I I H A





Tips

Stop Purple Loosestrife!

- If you see purple loosestrife, pull it up right away. Put the plant pieces in plastic bags.
- Tell others about purple loosestrife. It destroys native plants, animals, and wetlands.
- Read labels before you buy any seed packages. You'll find purple loosestrife seeds in some wildflower seed mixes. Don't buy them!

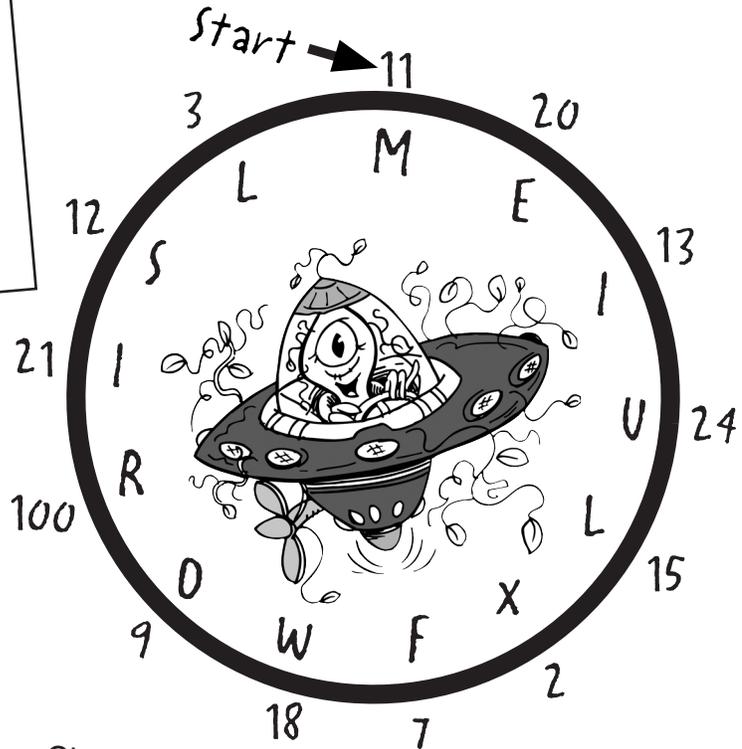
Check boats for milfoil!



BEWARE

Another alien weed has invaded America. This weed

- clogs rivers and lakes,
- crowds out native plants,
- grows into mats so thick that boats and swimmers can't get through, and
- destroys food and habitat for our fish and water birds.



Circle the letters by the odd numbers. You'll spell the name of this weed!

Date: _____ Feet _____ Inches

With moist soil and full sun, purple loosestrife can grow up to 10 feet tall. How tall are YOU?

Did You Know?

Tip for Grown-ups:

Pulling purple loosestrife? Thoroughly brush off your clothes and equipment before leaving the site so you don't transport the small seeds to new areas. Put all purple loosestrife plant pieces in plastic bags (vegetation rots quickly in plastic). Take the bags to a sanitary landfill site. Be sure the landfill site doesn't require bags to be broken open for composting. Composting is not advised, as purple loosestrife seeds may not be destroyed and the thick, woody stems and roots take a long time to decompose. If facilities exist in your area, incineration is an effective way to dispose of plant material.

