

Aquatic Invasive Species Update Washington & Waukesha Counties



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[Washington County Website](#)
[Waukesha County Website](#)

Snapshot Day

This year's Snapshot Day event took place on August 15th. We had 21 volunteers in Washington and Waukesha counties participate and over 35 sites monitored!

The AIS team in both Washington and Waukesha counties would like to first give a HUGE thank you to all who participated!!! This monitoring is crucial to slowly and preventing the spread of invasive species through our counties.

RESULTS:

First and foremost, there was NO new STARRY STONEWORT detected at ANY of the monitoring sites!

We were able to verify a few sites with Purple Loosestrife, Banded Mystery Snails, and Rusty Crayfish. All of these sites have had these invasives for a while now, but we were able to get them confirmed, verified, and vouchered through this event!

Battle of the Invasives: Purple Loosestrife vs. Blue Vervain, *Liatris*/Prairie Blazing Star, and Fireweed

Steven Schwartz

Purple loosestrife is easily one of the most recognizable names in the world of invasive plants, at least in this neck of the woods. Though now controlled by an extremely effective beetle breeding program, loosestrife is no less a threat than it was in the 1970's when the population first began booming. Unfortunately, this wetland and shoreline plant has several look-alikes, all of which are native and many of which are important plants for local pollinators. Here, I will compare and contrast these "plants with spikes of purple flowers" that, when viewed side by side, will hopefully seem less identical

Flowers



-Purple loosestrife (upper left) flowers are individually very small and grow on spikes around 1 foot long. They possess 5-6 small, bright purple or pink petals with 12 stamens in the center and a short stem.

-Liatris (upper right) plants grow spikes of densely packed pale purple compound flowers whose petals often branch out into hair-like growths called bracts, giving the flowers a shaggier appearance.

-Blue vervain (lower left) flowers are blue-ish purple with five small petals. The spikes themselves are densely packed with flowers, almost possessing a scaly appearance like a reptile's tail when the flowers haven't bloomed. These flowers also do not open all at once, instead opening in ascending rings up the spike

-Fireweed flowers (lower right) are pinkish-purple with four narrow petals set in between four broader petals. The flowers are set on long stems off of the main stem, far longer than the other three plants with similar flower arrangements.

Leaves

Purple loosestrife: upper left. Liatris: upper right. Blue vervain (lower left). Fireweed flowers (lower right)



- Purple loosestrife leaves are soft and downy to the touch. Liatris plants

may have hair on them to varying degrees, but it will be on all parts of the plant, not just the leaves.

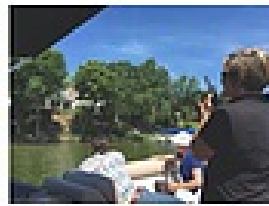
- Purple loosestrife leaves are set opposite each other. Blue vervain leaves are also opposite, while fireweed has alternately placed leaves and Liatris has thin grass-like leaves arranged all about the stem.
- -Purple loosestrife leaves alternate positions down the stem with each pair by 90 degrees.
- Blue vervain leaves are heavily serrated, while purple loosestrife leaves have smooth outer margins.

Stem

- Purple loosestrife stems are often reddish, woody, and square shaped in cross section. The stem of fireweed is red as well, but it is smooth instead of angular. Blue vervain has a square shaped stem, but it is not red in color.
- Stems of the purple loosestrife will often branch off of each other in mature specimens, while the other flowers with usually have their own stalks

Seeds

- The seeds of the purple loosestrife are extremely tiny and are usually contained in pods a few millimeters long. The seeds themselves are as tiny as grains of sand, and can be produced in the millions by a mature plant.
- Fireweed seed capsules are long and upright, producing hundreds of small seeds which have silky hairs on them to aid in wind dispersal
- Liatris seeds are long, dark, and cone shaped, measuring at 5-6 millimeters in length.



You're Invited!

Lake Country Clean Waters Quarterly Meeting

An educational forum for river and lake groups

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Wednesday, September 23, 2020 * 6 PM - 8 PM

Meeting will be conducted VIA ZOOM

See registration information at <http://www.lakecountrycleanwaters.org/>.

Meeting Agenda Highlights:

- The North Lake Management District will present on an *underwater drone project and other measures* they've implemented to ensure lake conservation in SE WI.
- There will be an update on *management projects* from our Washington Waukesha AIS Coordinator Samantha Lammers.

For More Information:

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The Aquatic Invasive Species Program is a cooperative effort between Washington & Waukesha Counties, supported by grant funds from Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and a number of generous local lake groups working to control the spread of AIS. Thank you for your support!

For more information:

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