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“Helping Others Grow”

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SMG's Grow Native!

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Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) is an easy to grow, long blooming, colorful perennial plant that grows well in wetlands, ditches, and irrigation project areas. Once established, it forms dense clusters of plant material with purple spiked flowers that encroach deeply into native vegetation. Because it spreads rapidly and disturbs native plant material and the wildlife that depends on native plants for survival, purple loosestrife is on the invasive plant list of most states, including Indiana.

Blazing star (*Liatris spicata*) is one of the replacement plant suggestions made by the Midwest Invasive Plant Network. Blazing star is in the daisy or aster family and is a clump forming perennial, growing 2-4 feet tall with red-purple spike-like flowers. It grows from corms but is most often propagated by seed. Moist sandy soil



Blazing Star

Photo: Bugwood.org

in full sun is preferred, but the plant tolerates varied soil and moisture conditions. Blazing star will do well in a pollinator garden, perennial border, rain garden, or native plant garden. It would look well with companion plants such as Beebalm (*Monarda didyma*) and Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*).

You can see from the pictures that Blazing star is similar in appearance to the undesirable purple loosestrife.

Other replacement plant suggestions for purple loosestrife are swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) or Carolina phlox (*Phlox carolina*).



Purple Loosestrife

Photo: Bugwood.org

References:

- Indiana Native Plant Society, <https://indiananativeplants.org/invasive-plants/indiana-invasive-plant-list/>
- Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health, University of Georgia, <https://bugwoodcloud.org/mura/mipn/assets/File/Publications/Landscape%20Alternatives%20Brochure%202018.pdf>
- North Carolina State Extension, <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/liatris-spicata/>
- Missouri Botanical Society Plant Finder, <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=d780>