


Tried and True Native Plants To Replace Invasive Plants

Best Bets: Plants
for Particular Uses
in the Mid-Atlantic

INVASIVE PLANT: Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)



Although considered a noxious weed, this plant of Eurasian origin is still available for sale. It was introduced as a contaminant in ships' ballast and as a medicinal herb and has spread along roads, canals, and drainage ditches to degrade wetlands since the early 1800s. Nearly all states and many Canadian provinces have been infested, and it is listed as invasive in Arlington and Alexandria.

Problems	Purple Loosestrife & Dense Blazing Star
Highly invasive plant with woody tap roots	
Spreads in wetlands, dominating and disrupting natural habitat	
Changes water flow patterns	
Documented impact on Chesapeake Bay	
Eliminates food sources and cover plants for marsh animals	
Produces numerous minute seeds easily carried by wind and water	
Also re-sprouts from root pieces	
Desired Characteristics	
Wet-tolerant perennial with long bloom season	
Native Alternatives	
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i> (Swamp Milkweed)	
<i>Clethra alnifolia</i> (Sweet Pepperbush)	
<i>Eutrochium dubium</i> (Coastal Plain Joe-pye-weed)	
<i>Liatris spicata</i> (Dense Blazing Star / Gayfeather)	
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i> (Cardinal Flower)	
<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i> (Great Blue Lobelia)	
<i>Verbena hastata</i> (Blue Vervain)	
<i>Vernonia noveboracensis</i> (New York Ironweed)	
developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria	

Images by Elaine Mills, Arlington and Pollinator Garden