

# KENTUCKY'S Least Wanted Plant

*Promoting alternatives to invasive landscape plants*

**2001**

To heighten awareness of invasive plants that threaten Kentucky's native biodiversity, a **Least Wanted** plant will be featured in the Spring of each year with suggested alternatives.

## Least Wanted!

**Purple loosestrife**  
*Lythrum salicaria*



Native to Eurasia, Purple loosestrife has rapidly become one of the most damaging invasive plants. The small seeds of Purple loosestrife are easily spread by wind or water to disturbed soil in wetlands or along stream edges. Once Purple loosestrife is established in a site, it spreads rapidly displacing the native vegetation. We are requesting the help of nursery owners, landscapers and gardeners to prevent further spread of this species by not using this species in gardens. Several alternatives are presented below.

## Good Native Alternatives



photo by Thomas Barnes

**Blazing star**  
*Liatris spicata*

A showy alternative to Purple loosestrife, Blazing star flowers in the late summer and can reach heights up to 3'. Blazing star grows in wet, open areas, but it adapts easily to typical garden soil conditions. The flowers of blazing star attract a wide variety of butterflies. Some excellent cultivars include 'Kobold', 'Floristan White', and 'Floristan Violet'.

**Great blue lobelia**  
*Lobelia siphilitica*

This striking plant is native to moist, shaded woods, however, it can tolerate full sun in a garden. The plant grows 1-3 feet tall and produces spikes of blueish lavender flowers throughout the month of September. White-flowered individuals of this species are sometimes found. Blue lobelia is easily propagated by division or seed.



photo by Thomas Barnes

  
Bernheim Arboretum  
and Research Forest



photo by Thomas Barnes

**Obedient plant**  
*Physostegia virginiana*

Obedient plant is a reliable late summer bloomer for the perennial border. Obedient plant was named because the flowers can be twisted on the stem and remain as arranged. Best in full sun, the plant also will perform admirably in light shade. 'Vivid', 'Variegata', and 'Miss Manners' are excellent cultivar selections.

*Kentucky's Least Wanted Program is sponsored by Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest  
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