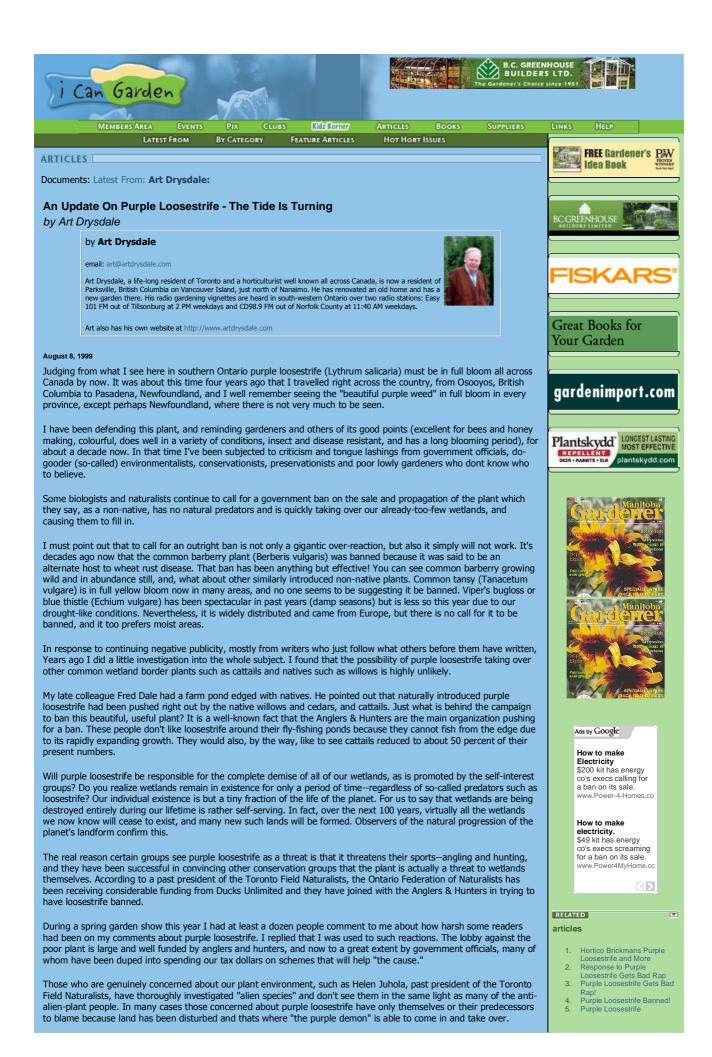
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Those condemning the plant might well check with competent researchers such as Dr. Spencer Barrett of the University of Torontos botany department. Dr. Barretts PhD.D. dissertation was on invasive alien species. He and his colleagues in that field dare anyone to show a natural, undisturbed pristine environment where purple loosestrife has invaded. He also points out the following. 1) The plant, though a major nuisance, is not causing any great economic loss (except maybe to the anglers and hunters!). 2) There is no data showing that it causes any loss of diversity of species. 3) It does not affect ecosystem health because most of the ecosystems are already disturbed.

It is also interesting to note that University of Guelph zoology department professor Ted Knuds has recently released a paper discussing the pros and cons and it concludes that the threats attributed to purple loosestrife are largely exaggerated, a point I have been making for a full decade. Further, I understand that the totally inept and misdirected research project at the University of Guelph that introduced three supposed bio-control insects - two that attacked the foliage, and one the roots - is finally ending because the funding has been cut. (Do we not remember rabbits in Australia and starlings here?) Though the funding has been cut we may well yet face a problem from one or two of these introduced species attacking other unique garden plants!

By Art C. Drysdale, 6 Nesbitt Drive, Toronto, Ontario M4W 2G3Art Drysdale is seen hourly every day on Canadas Weather Network at 23 minutes after the hour, and heard Saturdays from 9 to 11 am, with a live two-hour radio broadcast on Toronto's TALK640 (640 on the AM dial)



