

Arkansas Department of Agriculture Issues Reminder on Prohibited Plant Sales

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture (ADA) has issued a notice to nursery dealers, nurserymen, and landscape contractors reminding industry members that several plants remain on the state's Prohibited Plant List — and that recent inspections have revealed some of these species are still appearing on nursery sales floors.

Under Arkansas Rule Part 50 (Rules on Plant Diseases and Pests), the following four species are prohibited from sale, distribution, or use in any planting within the state:

- Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)
- Giant Salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*)
- Water Hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*, *E. azurea*)
- Japanese Blood Grass (*Imperata cylindrica*)

These species are prohibited because of the documented threat they pose to Arkansas's natural ecosystems. The rule makes no distinction between plant material, seed, or any other reproductive structure — all are equally off-limits.

If you or a producer you work with has any of these species on hand, the directive is clear: stop sale immediately. Existing inventory must be destroyed, and if sales records exist that could trace prior transactions, those records will need to be reviewed so that downstream contacts can be notified.

How Extension Can Help

This is a good opportunity for agents and specialists working with nursery producers to proactively audit their client contacts ahead of any formal inspection. If a grower is unsure whether a plant in their inventory matches a prohibited species, ADA's Donna Wilkerson can dispatch an inspector to assist — she can be reached at 501-219-6325.

From an Extension standpoint, this is also a timely reminder to reinforce integrated pest and weed management messaging with clientele. Several of these species — particularly Water Hyacinth and Giant Salvinia — are aggressive aquatic invaders, and Purple Loosestrife has a well-documented history of displacing native wetland vegetation. Building producer awareness around why these species are prohibited, not just that they are, goes a long way toward voluntary compliance.

For the full text of the applicable regulations, producers can access Part 50: Rules on Plant Diseases and Pests through the Code of Arkansas Rules at agriculture.arkansas.gov, or contact ADA directly at (501) 225-1598.



Figure 1: Purple loosestrife flower. Credit: Norman E. Rees; USDA - ARS



Figure 2: Giant Salvinia. Credit: Scott Bauer; USDA-ARS



Figure 3: Water Hyacinth. Credit Ted Center; USDA-ARS.



Figure 4: Cogongrass. Credit Karan Rawlins, UGA.