

Beware invasive plants for sale
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Some plants that are readily available online, at garden centers and aquarium stores are actually invasive species, according to Jen Ricker-Feak at the Iron Baraga Conservation District. She urged buyers to be aware of species invasive to our area that are readily available via certain online and brick-and-mortar retailers.

A quick online search for the invasive plants commonly called purple loosestrife and parrot feather brought up online sellers with both Amazon and Etsy. The search results also returned websites for garden centers at some big box stores.

More reassuring were sites like Gardener's Supply Company that redirected to a page on their website describing the dangers of invasive species, rather than offering to sell them. Also, buyers can find nurseries dedicated to native plants, like Designs by Nature in Marquette.

"Invasive species pose an enormous threat to Michigan biodiversity and economic well being," according to the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network.

To prevent accidentally purchasing an invasive plant species, first conduct an internet search to see if the plant is on the invasive species list. Buyers might also want to know the scientific names of plants to avoid.

Sometimes native plants have common names that are very similar to invasive plants. For example: Swamp loosestrife, or *decodon verticillatus*, is native; purple loosestrife, or *lythrum salicaria*, is invasive. While the scientific names of these plants are definitely different their more commonly used names are not.

Sites like Take Aim (takeaim.org) provide information about aquatic invasive species and list native alternatives. Sites like RIPPLE (canr.msu.edu/invasive_species/ripple) hope to reduce invasive pets and plants from escaping their homeowners into nature.

According to its website: "RIPPLE is a campaign aimed at educating both consumers and retailers about proper containment and disposal methods for (invasive) plants and animals associated with the pond and pet store industries. RIPPLE focuses on the risks associated with releasing aquatic invasive plants and animals."