

July 2016 Plant of the Month



Lysimachia quadrifolia L., Whorled Loosestrife

Plant of the Month for July is a native perennial herb found throughout New Jersey. Whorled loosestrife is frequent and found in every county within upland, forested habitats. Our plants are 2-8 decimeters tall, with lance-shaped leaves in distinct whorls of four, supporting axial borne flowers, with five yellow petals. The red center of the flower is a characteristic feature.

Lysimachia quadrifolia is a member of the Primrose family, the Primulaceae. New Jersey is home to eight taxa of *Lysimachia*, making it a well represented genus in our flora. Included in our flora are other notable species such as fringed loosestrife, moneywort, and swamp candles. Our species is an upland dwelling plant with a preference to open woodlands, shaded roadsides and similar dry habitats.

Native Americans in Eastern woodlands used this species as a gastrointestinal aid for bowel and kidney problems. It was a well known plant in the native medicine, specifically in the Cherokee and Iroquois tribes.

Whorled loosestrife is in full flower between June and August. It is visible throughout Southern New Jersey now, and it should be visible throughout the State as the summer progresses. Search dry open woodlands and roadsides for this interesting and easy to identify wildflower.

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