Japanese stiltgrass

(*Microstegium vimineum*)

Identification and Control

MC-IRIS (Monroe County—Identify and Reduce Invasive Species)

Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum)* is a non-native annual grass that was introduced to the southeastern U.S. from Asia in the early 1900s. Now found in much of the eastern U.S. , this invasive grass is common in parts of Monroe County though in many places it has just started to invade. Fortunately, controlling this invasive grass can quickly restore the diversity of an area. A variety of effective control methods are described on the back of this sheet.

Why should I be concerned?

Japanese stiltgrass creates large, dense infestations that can quickly crowd out native wildflowers, ferns and grasses. Invasions also reduce tree regeneration and slow the growth of tree seedlings. Japanese stiltgrass produces abundant seed and can spread quickly from one property to another by seeds carried on boots or tires. Landowners should be diligent in locating and eradicating new populations.

Where you will find it?

It is often found invading along forested roads, trails, and streams but can colonize a variety of habitats including sunny, open ridgetops and bottomland riparian habitats. Areas that have been disturbed (e.g. yards, streambanks, forests with windthrows or timber harvests) are especially vulnerable to invasions. It can also invade lawns and successfully flower and fruit despite regular mowing.

How do you identify Japanese stiltgrass?

Japanese stiltgrass can be identified by its relatively broad, bright green leaves that often form a shallow ‘v’ as they extend from the stem (see photo at right). Leaves also have a faint silver line down the mid-section. It is most often found in dense patches over three feet in diameter. It produces seed in September and October, while most native grasses produce seed much earlier in the year (June-July).

Japanese stiltgrass

Identification through the season

April—Japanese stiltgrass seedlings

May—small, multi-stemmed plant

June—July—plants start to sprawl and create mats.

August—Sept —plants produce simple spike of flowers and fruits

October—November—frost turns plants orange-brown

How can I control Japanese stiltgrass?

Preventing the movement of Japanese stiltgrass is the highest priority in management! Clean your boots and clothes to make sure you don't carry seeds to new areas.

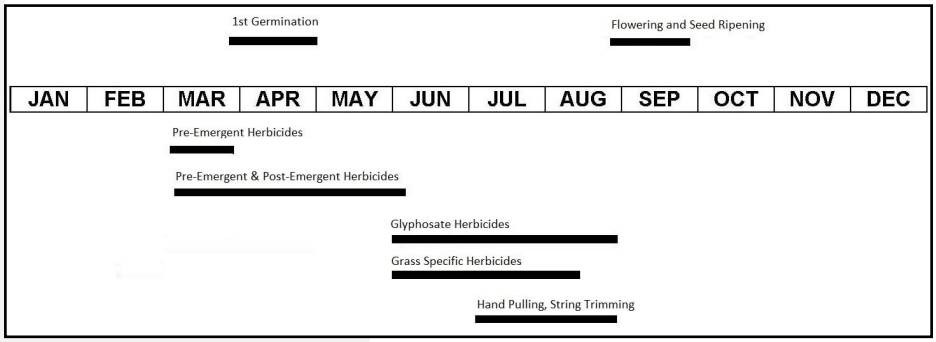
Small Areas. For small areas, hand weeding before the grass produces seed (e.g. before the end of August) is very effective at controlling Japanese stiltgrass. Mowing can help to reduce the amount of seed produced, but will likely not completely eliminate the species.

Pre-Emergent Methods of Control. Pre-emergent herbicides applied to the soil prevent the Japanese stiltgrass seeds from germinating. However, they will also prevent all other seeds from germinating, too. Known infestations can be treated before the stiltgrass germinates (March) by applying a pre-emergent herbicide such as pendimethalin or oryzalin.

Post-Emergent Methods of Control. Later in the season (June-August) it is best to use an herbicide with no soil activity to minimize non-target damage. Glyphosate (Drexel Imitator Plus or the water-safe Catt Plex) and the grass specific herbicide clethodim (Clethodim 2E) are available locally at Rural King. Clethodim acts slowly (two to four weeks), but at low use rates (0.5% - 0.66%) clethodim will kill annual grasses and only temporarily effect native perennial grasses. Glyphosate will act quickly (one to two weeks) but is non-selective (will kill all green plants it contacts). A very low use rate (0.5%) of glyphosate can be used, which will only temporarily effect other plant species, minimizing damage to non-target species.

*****Always follow label directions when using herbicides!*****

Japanese Stiltgrass Control Calendar



More information about invasive plant identification and control can be found on the MC-IRIS.org website.

MC IRIS
Monroe County
Identify and Reduce Invasive Species

August 2018