

New Invaders Watch Program

Early Detection and Rapid Response Network

COMMON NAME: JAPANESE STILT GRASS

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Microstegium vimineum*

FAMILY: *Poaceae*

ORIGIN: Temperate and tropical Asia

US INTRODUCTION: First documented in Tennessee in 1919, may have been introduced in porcelain packing material

MAJOR PATHWAYS OF SPREAD:

- Water
- Contaminated hay
- Footwear
- Unclean equipment and recreational vehicles
- Animals

IDENTIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS:

- Annual grass, flowers and seeds in late September – October, spreads by seed
- Plants tend to grow 1.5' to 3' in a branching, mat-forming manner
- Leaves pale green, narrow, 5-8 cm long with a silver stripe of reflective hairs down the middle of the upper leaf surface. Resemble bamboo
- Flower spikelets delicate and paired; one spikelet not on a stalk (sessile), one on a stalk (pedicel)
- Threatens forested wetlands, floodplain forest, moist woodlands, riparian corridors and also grows in disturbed areas



Leaves



Leaf with silver-haired mid vein



Mature branching plant



Seedlings in Spring

NATIVE LOOK-ALIKES:

Japanese stilt grass can be mistaken for our native white grass, *Leersia virginica*. Stilt grass has silvery stripe down the midrib (reflective hairs), paired spikelets, slight purplish tinge in fall. *L. virginica* does not have a hairy midrib, has single spikelets, and no purple tinge. *Leersia virginica* is also rough to touch and does not root from stem. Native common wood reed (*Cinna arundinacea*) is erect, 0.5 - 1.5 m tall with leaves 10 - 20 cm long and a robust spiked inflorescence



Leersia virginica inflorescence



M. vimineum leaves



Leersia virginica leaves

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Plant Conservation Alliance Fact Sheet.
<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/mivi1.htm>

USDA Plants Database.
<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=MIVI>

River to River CWMA Stilt grass Summit.
<http://www.rtrcwma.org/stiltgrass/>



Stilt grass invasion along a trail in a floodplain forest