## **GRASSY WEEDS**

TITLE:	JOHNSONGRASS
LATIN NAME:	Sorghum halepense
FAMILY:	Poaceae
OVERALL DESCRIPTION:	
Johnsongrass is an upright aggressive perennial warm-season grass, with wide leaves bearing a prominent thick white midrib. Adult plants can grow up to 7 feet tall. Johnsongrass has rhizomatous growth and is known to be extremely invasive. Johnsongrass can form dense colonies that can outcompete native vegetation.	
LIFE CYCLE	Perennial
SEASONS OF	Most active growth in summer and fall.
GROWTH	Seedlings sprout when soil temperatures
	reach 70 F, shoots from rhizomes sprout at 60 F.
LEAF SHEATHS	Sheath margins are hairless but may
	have hairs along the edge and margin.
FLOWERS /	Open panicle; seed head flowers May
SEEDHEAD	through October; seeds are long, dark
	brown and oval. Flower head has overall
	pyramid outline. Fruit can produce
	80,000 seeds in a single growing season.
LEAF BLADES	Length of up to 25 inches and about an
	inch wide; covered with dense long hairs
	along the upper surface, with thick white
	midvein. Tip is sharp-pointed
LEAF	Rolled
VERNATION	
LIGULE	Membranous with toothed edge; length
	varies 2-3 mm or more, with hair along
	the margin and edge.
AURICLE	None present
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ROOTS	Rhizomes are cream-colored and covered
	with orange scales; can be 10 inches or
	more below the soil
ANY OTHER	Johnsongrass is generally clumping and is
DISTINGUISHING	distinguished by the white midrib and
TRAITS	purple flower. It can rapidly form
- /	colonies.



Photos: University of Missouri



Photo: Virginia Tech



## **TYPICAL GRASSY WEED**

TYPE OF SOIL CONDITIONS OR PRACTICES FAVORING GROWTH	Johnsongrass likes fertile land along creeks and riverbanks but does equally well along roadsides and disturbed sites. It does not do well in deep shade.
KEY MESSAGE TO HOMEOWNER	Since this weed is rhizomatous, tillage of soil can break up and spread the rhizomes. However, fall tillage can bring the rhizomes to the surface where winter conditions may kill them. Single control measures (cultural or chemical) are often not adequate for control. The critical time for eradication is when johnsongrass is getting established before it spreads.
CULTURAL CONTROL	Hand pulling when first observed is beneficial, particularly in small areas. Fall tillage may also help deter this grass.
BIOLOGICAL CONTROL	None.
CHEMICAL CONTROL	Apply in late summer. An integrated approach is beneficial using soil- applied herbicides, postemergence herbicides and tillage. Diligence is important for eradication; apply control techniques as often as necessary. Spot-treat with a nonselective herbicide that contains glyphosate. In ornamental gardens, preemergence herbicides (Table 4.15, Virginia Tech Pest Management Guide) such as Casoron, Pendulum, Snapshot, Surflan, and Trifuralin are recommended. Recommended postemergence herbicides (Table 4.16) are: Ornamec, Roundup and Segment
SOURCES OF	Johnsongrass Control, Extension University of Missouri
INFORMATIoN	https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/g4872 Johnsongrass; Mississippi State University Extension http://extension.msstate.edu/publications/publications/johnsongrass
	https://www.invasive.org/browse/subinfo.cfm?sub=3075
	Johnsongrass in Pastures: Weed or Forage? OSU Extension <u>https://extension.okstate.edu/fact-sheets/johnsongrass-in-pastures-weed-or-forage.html</u>
	Johnsongrass, VT Weed Identification https://weedid.cals.vt.edu/profile/261
	University of California Integrated Pest Management Program http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/WEEDS/johnsongrass.html
	Virginia Cooperative Extension Pest Management Guide, Home Grounds & Animals 2021 https://fairfaxgardening.org/wp-
	content/webdocs/ref/2021PestManagementGuide.pdf
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