

Japanese Stiltgrass*

Microstegium vimineum

Life cycle - Invasive* summer annual.

Growth habit - Bright green grass has silver hairs down the center of its short bamboo-like blade; grows up to 2 ft. tall. Has a weak and shallow root system.

Note: you may want to bag up the grass clippings to further reduce the possibility of spreading their seed all over your lawn.

Reproduction

Roots at nodes; elongates quickly in fall, then produces seed banks which stay viable in the soil for many years. Dies back in the fall. Seeds germinate in late winter/early spring. The sticky, tiny seeds can be spread into other areas on the fur and hooves of animals (deer), by water, shoes, and clothes.

Conditions that favor growth

Invades and alters disturbed soils in sun or shade. Tolerates low mowing.

Management

Cultural control in ornamental beds

Prevent going to seed; hand pulls easily. Do not compost plants with seed heads. ***Dispose of in bags for trash removal.***

Forested Areas

- Mechanical - Hand pull or if area is too large cut it back with a mower or string trimmer. Do this in late summer before it goes to seed in the fall.

In Lawns

•Cultural Practices

Maintain healthy, dense turf that can compete and prevent weed establishment.

•Mechanical Management

Hand pulling or using an appropriate weeding tool are the primary means of mechanical weed control in lawns. This is a viable option at the beginning of an infestation and on young weeds. Hand pulling when the soil is moist makes the task easier. Weeds with tap roots like dandelions or have a basal rosette (leaves clustered close to the ground) like plantain are easier to pull than weeds such as Bermudagrass (wiregrass) or creeping Charlie (ground ivy) that spread with stolons or creeping stems that root along the ground.

•Chemical Prevention/Treatment in Lawns

Herbicides should be used as a last resort because of the potential risks to people, animals, and the environment. ***Be aware of these precautions first.***

Use a granular (apply with a spreader), selective, preemergent herbicide. Apply a preemergent without nitrogen fertilizer. Look for the active ingredient:

- Prodiamine (**Barricade**) or other preemergents labeled for crabgrass control.

Apply in early spring (March) before it germinates. *Early Spring should be interpreted as the last two weeks of MARCH!* It germinates earlier than *crabgrass* so to prevent stiltgrass the preemergent needs to be applied a couple of weeks earlier than for crabgrass prevention. Rainfall or irrigation is required to dissolve the herbicide which is then absorbed into the upper portion of the soil and forms a barrier which kills weed seedlings. *(Actually it prevents the seedlings from creating a root and without a root it can not survive.)*

Preemergent grass herbicides have residual activity that lasts for several weeks after application. High temperatures and rainfall will decrease the length of time they remain at sufficient concentration to be effective. *I recommend the re-application of this item be conducted no later than Mid-July as the prolonged hot summers we are experiencing may result in both Crabgrass and Japanese Stiltgrass germinating in mid to late Summer. See comments below regarding possibly applying the pre-emergent as many as three times a year.*

Tips for application:

- If planning soil disturbance, such as aeration, do it before application.
- Apply prior to seed germination which begins, in early spring a couple of weeks before crabgrass seeds germinate.
- Water after application, according to label.
- A second application may be possible, usually 6-8 weeks later (see product label). *(if you apply this in late March or very early April then I would also re-apply this item again in very late May/Early June and again in mid August. If this was only being used to prevent Crabgrass then mid-July would be sufficient, but for Japanese Stiltgrass three applications may be better.)*

Consult label for specific waiting period between application and overseeding.

If Japanese stiltgrass is already present in your lawn a postemergent herbicide labeled to control annual grass weeds like crabgrass can be used to spot treat young weeds *(this probably means before they reach a height of 2 to 3 inches.)* Herbicides do not work well on mature plants. Look for the active ingredient *Fenoxaprop*.

NOTE: This article was copied from the University of Maryland's Home & Garden Information Center. Items in purple highlighted italics were comments that I added to their article.

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