

Weed of the Month for October 2016

Japanese Stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*)

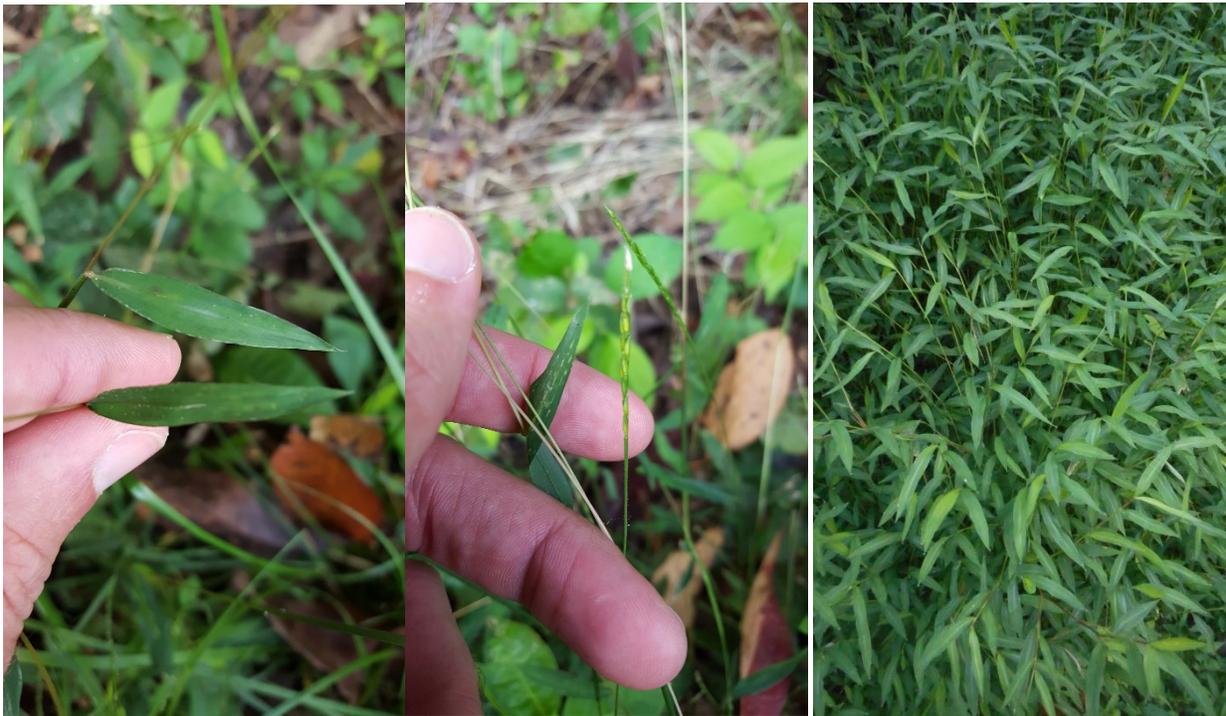
Origin: Southeast Asia

Interesting Fact: Japanese Stiltgrass is considered an invasive plant in at least 20 states, Indiana included. It has invaded most of the woods in Southern Indiana, but somehow Knox County has avoided major infestations to date. Make sure to report any stiltgrass infestation to the county SWCD office, so we can keep it that way!

Description: Japanese Stiltgrass is an annual grass that can grow up to 6 ft. tall and has leaves with a silvery line in the middle as well as small seed heads.

Defining characteristics:

- Small, alternate leaves with a silvery stripe in the middle
- Small, inconspicuous seed heads that develop in September and October
- Grows in dense mats



(Left image) Japanese Stiltgrass' leaves with silvery mid stripe

(Center image) The small seed heads of Japanese Stiltgrass

(Right image) A patch of Japanese Stiltgrass (note that it creates dense mats)

Habitat: Found along right-of-ways, forest edges and interior woods, floodplains, early successional areas, and riparian corridors.

A roadside infestation
of Japanese Stiltgrass in
Knox County.



Ecological threat: Japanese Stiltgrass is a warm season grass but does not require as much sunlight as most warm season grasses. Thus, it outcompetes the cool season grasses that normally occur in forest understories. In addition, a single Japanese Stiltgrass seed head can contain up to a thousand seeds, helping it create dense mats and spread rapidly.

Control Methods:

- Manual: For small clumps, hand pulling is effective. Mowing can be used for larger flat infestations before the grass goes to seed.
- Chemical: Applying a grass-specific herbicide (e.g. Poast or clethodim) to the leaves before the grass develops its seed heads.

References

Apsley, David K. and Annemarie Smith. 2011. Controlling Non-Native Invasive Plants in Ohio Forests: Japanese Stiltgrass. Web.

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Kleczewski, Nathan et al. 2011. An Introduction to *Microstegium vimineum* (Japanese stiltgrass/Nepalese browntop) an Emerging Invasive Grass in the Eastern United States. Purdue Extension Weed Science. Web.