

Japanese Stilt Grass

Microstegium vimineum

Background: Japanese Stilt Grass was unintentionally introduced in Tennessee in 1919. Its introduction is thought to result from its use as packing material for porcelain. Stilt grass is currently found in 16 eastern states.

Identification: Stilt grass is an annual in the grass family. It resembles a delicate form of bamboo with its pale green, lance-shaped leaves distinguished by a silvery midrib(vein down the middle). Stilt grass can grow 2-3 feet tall and occurs in moist areas such as stream banks and floodplains. It tolerates full sun to deep shade so it is especially threatening to native understories. It prefers soil that is disturbed and highly acidic. Stilt grass produces 100-1000 seeds annually that remain viable for up to three years. Seeds are thought to be dispersed through water and animals.

Control: Stilt grass can be hand-pulled at any stage or it can be mowed prior to seed production. Herbicides are also an option for large infestations of stilt grass.

Natives groundcover alternatives include:

White Grass (*Leersia virginica*) which is beneficial to Peck's Skipper (a native butterfly), or any native plant suitable to site conditions.

Photo source: database for the National Park Service, nps.gov (both stilt grass pictures), database for Illinois Wildflowers, illinoiswildflowers.com (white grass)



White Grass