

STILTGRASS (*Microstegium vimineum*)

This invasive of global concern is spreading in Michigan.

Identification:

- Delicate, low-growing annual grass with stems that sprawl over one another and root at the nodes.
- The alternate leaves are short (~3-8 cm long and 5-10 cm wide), pale green, lance-shaped with a distinctive shiny mid-rib, slightly off center. Green stems turn purple and brown late season in the sun.



Habitat: Stiltgrass is very adaptable and tolerates varying levels of soil acidity and moisture. It prefers forested floodplains where it outcompetes native plants in deep shade. However, it will grow in full sun.

Native Range: China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, and India



U.S. Distribution: Stiltgrass was first documented in Knoxville, TN in 1919 where it was introduced as packing material for porcelain and Asian goods. Ruminants found it unpalatable. It has spread across much of the eastern U.S. as far north as New Hampshire and as far south as Texas. It is now ranked as a Category 1 invasive plant by the US Forest Service.

Local Concern: Producing 100-1,000 seeds per plant, it can spread rapidly by water flow, wildlife, lawnmowers, foot and vehicular traffic. Deer will browse native plants and avoid stiltgrass—hastening the growth of monocultures.

Other Common Names: Nepalese browntop, Asian stiltgrass.

To report possible sightings:

WashtenawStiltgrass@gmail.com or call 734.210.0267

Greg Norwood at DNR Wildlife Division, norwoodg@michigan.gov or 517-342-4514.

Why does stiltgrass appear across much of the eastern half of the country? Help us keep the EDD map from being filled with more green boxes?

Currently documented in Washtenaw, Lenawee, and Cass counties in Michigan.

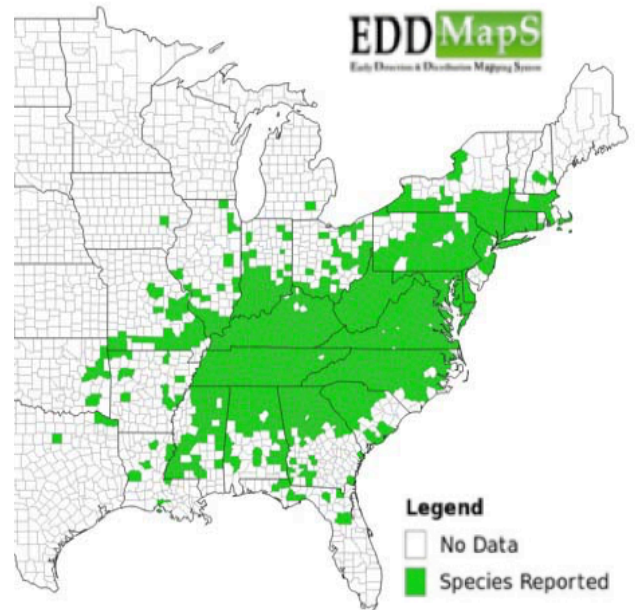
Why is control of stiltgrass so difficult?

We are more familiar with forbes than grasses. Stiltgrass can easily be confused with native White/Cut Grass (*Leersia virginica*).

The 3-month growing season of this annual is out of sync with most natural areas' management programs. Seedlings emerge continuously from early June and inflorescence in late Aug/early Sept.

Grows anywhere: deep shade to full sun.

Spreads explosively from initial clumps. 100-1,000 small seeds, per year. 3-5 years.



Practical things that you can do:

When camping or hiking, especially in stiltgrass country, be especially attentive to boots, bikes, tents, etc. One summer can bring stiltgrass from the Smokies to the Porkies

Keep a box of trashbags in your car. Stick one in your pocket whenever you go for a hike in a natural area. Note sightings on GPS, take photos, call it in. If it is a small patch, pull it. Learn to distinguish it from *Leersia*.

Organizational things you can do:

Much of southern Lower Michigan consists of private lands. Taxpayer-funded entities cannot work on private lands. Through CISMAs or Working Groups, educate locally. The partners of the Washtenaw Stiltgrass Working Group surveyed nearly 975 acres in Scio Township in 2018, treated 80 properties, held training sessions and townhall meetings. And, we only started in June 2018 *without* a name or funding! Just think what you can do.

For more information and research: <http://annarbor.wildones.org/stiltgrass/>

or Andrea Matthies and Jim Odell: stiltgrass@jamesodell.com