

## Background

Japanese Stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) is an aggressive, non-native invasive grass from southeastern Asia. It was introduced to the United States as packing material for porcelain imports. Stiltgrass was first documented in Tennessee in 1919 and has since spread to over 20 states and Puerto Rico.

In Connecticut, Japanese Stiltgrass is present in all eight counties. Although it has recently been discovered in the Upper Farmington River corridor, most of the populations are small and so far controllable at this early stage. Eradication efforts are underway.

Stiltgrass spreads very quickly. It is commonly introduced to roadsides through contaminated soil & machinery used by state and municipal road crews and utility companies. From there seeds can spread far distances through run-off; on tires, hiking clothes (footwear, pant cuffs), pets, etc.

The Farmington River Coordinating Committee needs your help to report new populations and to help control existing ones!

## Resources

CT Invasive Plant Working Group  
(CIPWG)  
<http://cipwg.uconn.edu/>

USDA Plant Database  
<http://plants.usda.gov/>

Invasive Plant Atlas of New England  
(IPANE)  
<https://www.eddmaps.org/ipane/>

CT Department of Energy and  
Environmental Protection (DEEP)  
(860) 424-3000



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Coordinating Committee**  
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<http://www.farmingtonriver.org/>

# Japanese Stiltgrass

What you need to know to  
prevent the spread of this  
non-native pest



## Why is Japanese Stiltgrass Considered Invasive?

Japanese Stiltgrass is a very fast spreading non-native grass that invades natural areas where it disrupts biological processes.

Plants can produce up to 1,000 seeds per plant. The resulting dense growth shades out native plants preventing them from growing. This can be a problem in forested riverine habitats, as germinating trees will be out-competed and the forest cannot regrow. Erosion often results where only this shallow-rooted grass remains & deeper-rooted plants are no longer present to help retain the soil.

Although Stiltgrass is extremely shade tolerant, it can grow in habitats ranging from full sun to almost complete shade. This leaves few habitats protected from this invader, except those with very dry soils.

Outside of its native range, Stiltgrass has no natural predators. Native herbivores including insects are not known to feed on it.

# Description

## Size

- grows to 2-6 feet in length; has a sprawling habit.

## Leaves

- pale green,
- **distinct silver midrib** (stripe down middle of most leaves),
- 1-3 inches long; lance-shaped.

## Other features

- germinates in late spring,
- flowers late August with seed production from early September until the first frost,
- produces 100 - 1,000 seeds per plant,
- it is an annual.

The distinct, silver mid-rib is a good clue but may not be present on all leaves.



Infestation

## **Please Note:**

Japanese Stiltgrass is often confused with Virginia Whitegrass (*Leersia virginica*) as they are similar in appearance. They are often found growing together.

Virginia Whitegrass lacks the silver stripe down the center of its leaves, is darker in color and flowers a few weeks before Stiltgrass. It is a perennial.



Japanese Stiltgrass



Virginia Whitegrass

## Before Eradicating Japanese Stiltgrass from Your Property:

**If you suspect that you have found Japanese Stiltgrass, please contact the Farmington River Coordinating Committee (FRCC). We may ask you to email us a digital image of the plant to confirm its identity and schedule a site visit so we can determine the extent of the infestation.**

FRCC is tracking infestations, so please report plants. We can help you control and monitor the infestation to prevent plants from spreading.

**Phone: (860) 379-0282**

**Online:**  
<http://www.farmingtonriver.org>

**Early detection and rapid removal (EDRR) of this invasive grass is critical to preventing plants from invading the Upper Farmington River Wild and Scenic Corridor.**

# Eradication

*Most eradication methods need to be repeated until the soil seed bank has been depleted.*

## **Weed Torch.**

We have found that using a propane weed torch is the most effective method. In order to kill these shallow-rooted plants and the seeds, a strong flame must be used. ***Stomp on the burned patches immediately. Keep a filled watering can or hose with you, drenching the site just burned to extinguish embers.***

**Pulling.** Hand pulling is most effective on small patches. For best results, this should be regularly done throughout the growing season as seeds germinate throughout the year.

## **Mowing/Weed-whacking.**

Cutting is the least effective method and will not prevent plants from spreading unless it is strictly timed - mowed plants will flower and produce seeds but at ground level. Allow plants to grow until they begin to produce flowers at the end of August - first week of September. Then, mow as close to the ground as possible. Mowing and weed-whacking should be followed up with hand pulling to remove even the smallest of plants as they too will produce seed.

**Herbicides are not recommended for riverside infestations.**