



Invasive Plants in Pennsylvania

Small Carpetgrass

Arthraxon hispidus



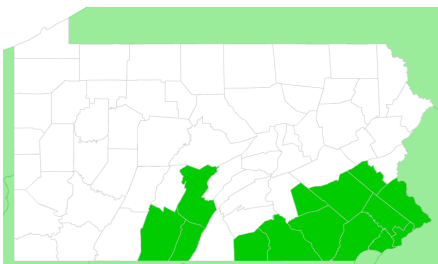
Photo: Leslie Mehrhoff, U. of Connecticut,
www.invasive.org

Background:

Also known as joint-head grass, this annual grass was introduced into the U.S. from Japan and eastern Asia. Earliest reports of the plant come from the early 1970s.

Range:

It can be found throughout the eastern half of the U.S. from New York to Florida, all the way to Kansas and Texas.



Map courtesy of www.eddmaps.org

Description:

This grass grows up to one and a half feet tall and has oval to lance-shaped leaves that are one to three inches in length with heart-shaped bases. The leaf margins have conspicuous hairs. Flowers are contained in one to several three-inch long spikes and bloom in early fall.



Photo: Leslie Mehrhoff, U. of Connecticut,
www.invasive.org

Habitat:

This grass grows in wet areas such as stream banks, shorelines, flood plains and wet meadows. It prefers sunny, moist areas.

Biology and Spread:

Small carpetgrass produces small, slender yellowish seeds that can be dispersed by flowing water.



Photo: Steve Hurst, USDA NRCS,
www.invasive.org

Ecological Threat:

This grass can form dense stands, particularly along shorelines, threatening native vegetation. Small carpetgrass often occurs alongside another highly invasive annual grass species, Japanese stilt grass (*Microstegium vimineum*).



Photo: Leslie Mehrhoff, U. of Connecticut,
www.invasive.org

How to Control this Species:

Manual

Small carpetgrass may be pulled or mowed before it produces seeds.

Chemical

It can be also effectively controlled using any of several readily available general-use herbicides approved for wetlands. Repeat applications may be necessary to reduce plant density. Be sure to follow the label and all state herbicide requirements.

Look-A-Likes:

Small carpetgrass looks similar to deertongue grass (*Dicanthelium clandestinum*). Deertongue grass is slightly larger, covered with stiff hairs and the leaves are typically longer and more lanceolate in shape.



Photo: John Cardina, OSU,
www.forestryimages.org

Native Alternatives:

There are many drought-tolerant native warm season grasses, such as (1) big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), (2) little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), indiagrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) and (3) switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*).



Photo: Chris Evans, River to River CWMA,
www.forestryimages.org



Photo: Howard Schwartz, Colorado State U.,
www.forestryimages.org



Photo: Howard Schwartz, Colorado State U.,
www.forestryimages.org

References:

Invasive Plant Atlas of New England:

http://www.eddmaps.org/ipane/ipanespecies/grass/Arthraxon_hispidus.htm

Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Management:

www.invasive.org

U.S. Forest Service Weed of the Week: http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants/weeds/jointhead-grass.pdf

For More Information:

DCNR Invasive Species Site: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/conservationscience/invasivespecies/index.htm>

US Forest Service Invasive Plant Field Guide:

http://na.fs.fed.us/pubs/misc/ip/ip_field_guide.pdf

National Park Service Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas:

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/pubs/midatlantic/midatlantic.pdf>