

# Sorghum Alnum (Columbus Grass) Fact Sheet

*Sorghum alnum parodi*

Poaceae Family



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## Distinguishing Features:

- ❶ **Flowers:** Loose, branching clusters growing 6-24 inches long with lax, spreading branches. Panicles droop as seeds grow larger.
- ❷ **Seeds:** Reddish-brown to black, oval, 0.25-0.4 inches long.
- ❸ **Leaves:** Leaves are 2.5-4 cm. wide and waxy. Stems are 1 inch thick and can reach up to 14 feet tall.
- ❹ **Flowering Time:** June to September.
- ❺ **Life cycle:** Perennial that spreads via thick short rhizomes.

## Impacts:

- Native to South America, Sorghum Alnum is a hybrid between Johnsongrass and Grain sorghum.
- Sorghum Alnum was intentionally grown as a forage crop in Australia, but escaped cultivation and now can be found infesting ditches, canals, fields, pastures, and roadsides.
- Quickly establishes in disturbed soils, sending out underground runners that sprout many stems and quickly form dense stands.



## Control:

- Small infestations can be removed manually by digging up individual plants. Care must be made to remove as much of the plant as possible, as stems will regenerate from rhizomes left in the ground. Repeated tilling can also be effective.
- Larger infestations require a combination of control methods. Cultivate in the summer before seeds heads form, then apply herbicide on regrowth.
- In pastures, spot spraying and maintaining a strong and competitive pasture will help prevent infestation.
- Chemical control can be effective against Sorghum Alnum when plants are actively growing. Herbicide treatment is particularly successful on seedlings and young plants before they flower.



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