

# Cogongrass Fact Sheet

*Imperata Cylindrica*

Poaceae Family



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## Distinguishing Features:

- ❶ **Flowers:** Flowers are silvery colored cylinders 5-8 inches long.
- ❷ **Seeds:** Cogongrass produces light, dandelion like seeds that attach to silvery tufts for wind dispersal. They are produced during early to mid-June.
- ❸ **Leaves:** Long blade-like leaves grow up in clumps from a central base. In cultivated ornamental versions, leaves are a deep red color. In natural versions, leaves are light green.
- ❹ **Flowering Time:** Flowering time differs based on local climate. In southern climates, intermittently year round. In cooler climates, mid-May to June.
- ❺ **Life cycle:** Cogongrass is a perennial grass in southern climates, but becomes an annual in colder northern areas. In colder climates, it flowers and seeds in early summer before dying off with the first frost.



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## Impacts:

- Cogongrass is a perennial grass that is commonly sold as an ornamental in nurseries across the country. In its' ornamental form, it poses little threat to native flora, but can easily revert to a much more invasive natural form if given the right conditions (excessive shade, water, well-drained soil)
- Cogongrass is an extremely invasive plant that can easily choke out many native plant species if given the opportunity.
- When dry, Cogongrass poses a significant fire risk. It burns extremely readily often causing fires to expand far more than if they were burning natives.

## Control:

- Mechanical control methods (pulling, cultivation, etc.) are effective only on small infestations (home gardens, etc.).
- There are currently no approved biocontrol agents for Cogongrass in the US, although several species of fungi are currently under investigation for possible future use.
- Chemical control can be effective against Cogongrass with multiple treatments. One treatment with Glyphosate herbicides can control leaf growth, but up to 2 further treatments may be needed to kill the rhizomatous root mat.



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