

Johnsongrass Fact Sheet

Sorghum halepense

Poaceae Family



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Distinguishing Features:

- ❶ **Flowers:** An open panicle with thousands of spikelets.
- ❷ **Seeds:** A single plant may produce more than 80,000 seeds in a single growing season, and 275 feet of rhizomes.
- ❸ **Leaves:** It has wide leaves with a thickened whitish midrib. The leaf ligule is jagged and membranous.
- ❹ **Flowering Time:** June to September.
- ❺ **Life cycle:** Johnsongrass is a hardy 2-8 foot tall perennial that spreads through seed and creeping lateral root systems. In addition to a typical fibrous root system, Johnsongrass produces thick cream-colored rhizomes, covered with orange scales.

Impacts:

- Originally introduced as a forage grass from the Mediterranean. Unfortunately, under frost or moisture stress, it becomes toxic to livestock.
- Johnsongrass is primarily a weed in row crops and can reduce crop yields in corn, sorghum, soybean, and cotton.

Control:

- Preventing Johnsongrass from becoming established in new areas is the best available control method, because the weed spreads in so many ways. Because Johnsongrass is a perennial weed, single cultural control measures or herbicide applications rarely provide adequate control.
- To reduce Johnsongrass infestations with herbicides, it will be necessary to use an integrated approach consisting of soil-applied herbicides, post emergence herbicides, crop rotation and tillage.



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