

Japanese Stilt Grass

Microstegium vimineum (Trin.) A. Camus

Alternate Common Names: Vietnamese Stilt Grass; Asian Stilt Grass; Nepalese Browntop; Chinese Packing Grass; Annual Jewgrass; Basketgrass; Mary's Grass

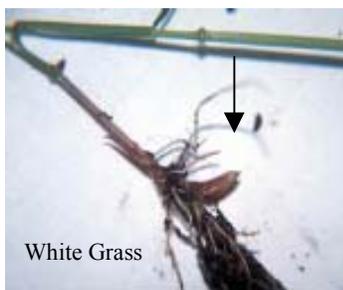
Alternate Latin Names: *Andropogon vimineus* Trin.; *Microstegium imberbis* Nees ex Steud.;

M. willdenovianum Nees ex Lindl.; *Eulalia viminea* (Trin.) Kuntze; *Pollinia viminea* (Trin.) Merr.; *P. imberbis* Nees ex Steud.; *P. willdenoviana* (Nees ex Lindl.) Benth.

- **annual grass; shade tolerant; lush, dense, light green stands** are prominent in late summer
- **sprawling growth;** frequently with **nodes marked by stiff, root-like structures** dropping into the ground and leafy stems growing upward as tall as 3'; **easy to pull up**
- **leaves alternate, 1 1/4"–3" long, up to 3/8" wide**, not thick; with **pointed tip and tapered base**
- **leaf midvein area frequently is wide and shiny white** (best seen in sunlight)
- **flowers mid-Sept. on stalks attached at ends of leaf stems;** seeds late-Sept. or early Oct.

Japanese Stilt Grass is generally recognizable by vegetative characteristics. It is often confused with (and may grow intermixed with) the native White Grass (*Leersia virginica* Willd.). Important characteristics to check for on **Japanese Stilt Grass vs. White Grass** are: (1) **stem nodes hairless** (check with hand lens) vs. tiny hairs protrude from nodes (usually visible even without a hand lens), (2) **all thin roots** vs. some roots are short, thickened rhizomes (underground stems), (3) **flower clusters on 1 or 2 (up to 5) densely-packed, spike-like branches** each with many pairs of green spikelets vs. flowers in an open panicle usually with 5⁺ branches, (4) **late fall leaf color is wine red/purple and pale yellow** vs. pale green or tan.

In New England, Japanese Stilt Grass seeds sprout in June. Plants grow rapidly on shady, moist sites where the soil has been disturbed, for example, riparian areas scoured by high water, roadsides, and lawns.



*Text and photos by: Charlotte Pyle, October 2002
Helpful review provided by: Lillian Willis*