

CENTRAL JERSEY INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM

Invasive Plant Fact Sheet

Japanese Stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*)



Family name: Grass family (Poaceae)

Native range: Eurasia

General: Slender, branching, annual grass from 2 to 6.5 feet tall. Germinates in spring and grows slowly through the summer. Stems jointed. Above ground root-like structures are stilt-like.

Leaves: Alternate, pale green, lance-shaped, 1 to 3 inches long, with a distinctive shiny midrib. Slightly hairy. Turning reddish in droughty, sunny conditions.

Flowers: Tiny, borne on slender stalks with 1 to 5 branches, appearing in August through September.

Fruit: Tiny, 0.1 inches, elliptical, ranging from yellow to yellow-purple. Ripening mid-September through August.

Look-alikes: Whitegrass or cutgrass (*Leersia virginica*) is a native perennial grass similar in appearance and preferred habitat to stiltgrass. Whitegrass

flowers in *early to mid-August*, has *sharp leaf edges*, and has a more open and branched flower than stiltgrass.

Habitat: Forest, forest edges, meadows, lawns. Prefers moist shaded environments like forests, but tolerates full sun, especially with adequate moisture.

Threats to native habitats: Japanese stiltgrass produces abundant seeds and quickly carpets forest floors, displacing native herbs and woody seedlings and degrading habitat for wildlife.



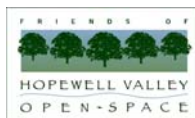
NJ Status: Japanese stiltgrass is widespread. It is *highly threatening* to natural plant communities. All newly detected occurrences should be eradicated.

Commercial Availability: None, but may be contained in soil of purchased landscape plants.



Sources: Forestry Images: Forest Health, Natural Resources & Silviculture Images: <http://www.forestryimages.org/>
<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien>
<http://nbii-nin.ciesin.columbia.edu/ipane>

Rhoads, A.F. and T. Block. 2007. Plants of Pennsylvania. 2nd ed. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA. p. 310-1, 390.



Central Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (CJISST) is a regional cooperative effort to detect, map, and manage emerging populations of invasive species. This initiative is a partnership of state, county, and municipal agencies, conservation groups, and private citizens. Please contact us: **Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space**, (609) 730-1560, www.fohv.org or **Upper Raritan Watershed Association**, (908) 234-1852, www.urwa.org.

