

# Invasive Alien Plant Species of Virginia

## Japanese Stilt Grass (*Microstegium vimineum*)

### Description

Japanese stilt grass, also known as eulalia, is an annual grass which forms dense mats. The somewhat reclining stems grow up to 40 inches long and may root at the stem nodes. The lime green leaves, four to five inches in length and half an inch wide, taper at both ends. The inflorescence may be at the end of the stem, or arise from leaf axils. Japanese stilt grass is similar to jointed grass (*Arthraxon hispidus*), another invasive alien grass species. Consult a natural resource specialist for accurate identification.

### Habitat

Japanese stilt grass prefers moist soils that are shaded from full sun. It is found in marshes, ditches, low woods, floodplains, woodland borders, damp fields, woodland thickets, lawns, and along streamsides, roadsides. Wet soils that have periods of standing water are not suitable for Japanese stilt grass, though its seeds can survive and germinate after extended periods of inundation.

### Distribution

Native to Asia from India to Japan, Japanese stilt grass was first

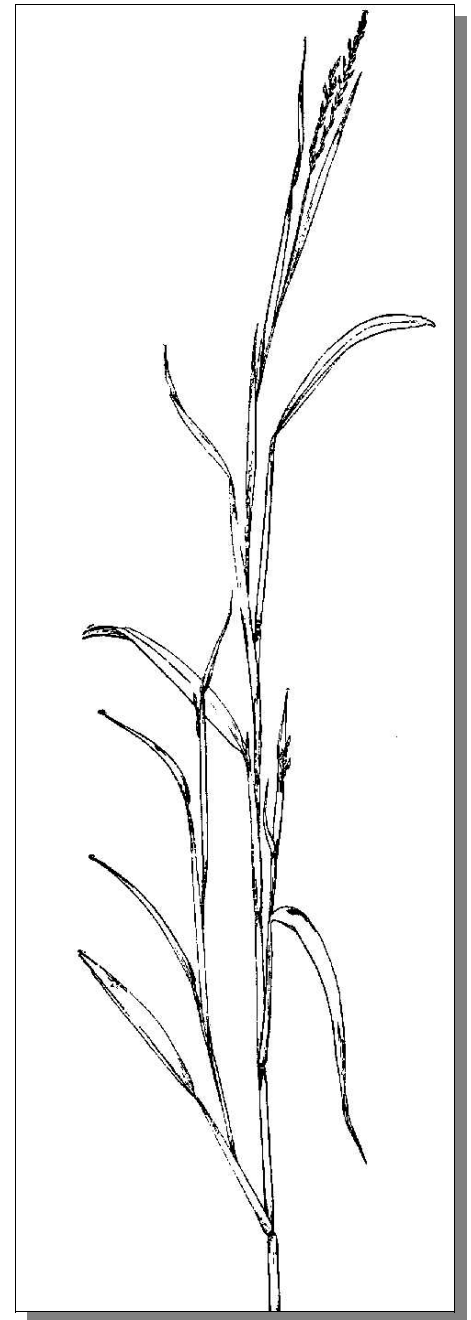
discovered in the United States in 1919 in Tennessee. Since then, it has spread to all states east of the Mississippi and south of and including Connecticut. Japanese stilt grass was used as a packing material for porcelain from China, and this was the likely means of its introduction to our area. Japanese stilt grass is found in every county in Virginia.

### Threats

Japanese stilt grass can spread rapidly following a disturbance such as flooding or mowing. Within three to five years it can form dense monotypic stands which crowd out native herbaceous vegetation. Although Japanese stilt grass does not produce prolific amounts of seed, a single plant typically giving rise to 100 to 1000 seeds, the seeds remain viable in the soil for three to five years. It is also well adapted to low light levels and is able to grow and produce seed in 5 percent of full sunlight.

### Control

The best strategy for controlling Japanese stilt grass is removal of the plant by hand or mechanical means late in the growing season before seed production. This



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For more information, contact the Department of Conservation and Recreation or the Virginia Native Plant Society.



Department of Conservation & Recreation  
CONSERVING VIRGINIA'S NATURAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

217 Governor Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219  
(804) 786-7951  
<http://www.state.va.us/~dcr/vaher.html>



Virginia Native Plant Society  
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400 Blandy Lane, Unit 2  
Boyce, Virginia 22620  
(540) 837-1600  
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practice must be carried out for seven consecutive years due to the long seed bank viability. Mowing or burning early in the season does not control the plant; new seeds germinate following such measures and can still set seed by the end of the season. Glyphosate herbicide is effective against Japanese stilt grass, but its use in a natural area may also affect desirable species. Glyphosate herbicides are recommended because they are biodegradable. However, glyphosate is a nonselective systemic herbicide that affects all green vegetation. To be safe and effective herbicide use requires careful knowledge of the chemicals, appropriate concentrations, and the effective method and

timing of their application.

For more information on native plant conservation, contact the Virginia Native Plant Society at the address below. For information on Virginia's natural areas and natural heritage resources contact the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Natural Heritage (see address below).

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