

Invasive Plants in Pennsylvania

Small carpetgrass

Arthraxon hispidus



Leslie Mehrhoff, Univ. of Connecticut

Background:

Also known as joint-head grass, this annual grass was introduced into the U.S. from Japan and eastern Asia. Earliest reports of the plant come from the early 1970s.

Habitat:

This grass grows in wet areas such as stream banks, shorelines, flood plains and wet meadows. It prefers sunny, moist areas.

Range:

It can be found throughout the eastern half of the U.S. from New York to Florida, all the way to Kansas and Texas.

Biology and Spread:

Small carpetgrass produces small, slender yellowish seeds that can be dispersed by flowing water.

Description:

This grass grows up to one and a half feet tall and has oval to lance-shaped leaves that are one to three inches in length with heart-shaped bases. The leaf margins have conspicuous hairs. Flowers are contained in one to several three-inch long spikes and bloom in early fall.



Leslie Mehrhoff, Univ. of Connecticut



Steve Hurst, USDA NRCS

Ecological Threat:

This grass can form dense stands, particularly along shorelines, threatening native vegetation. Small carpetgrass often occurs alongside another highly invasive annual grass species, Japanese stilt grass (*Microstegium vimineum*).



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How to Control this Species:

Small carpetgrass may be pulled or mowed before it produces seeds.

It can be also effectively controlled using any of several readily available general-use herbicides approved for wetlands. Repeat applications may be necessary to reduce plant density. Be sure to follow the label and all state herbicide requirements.

Look-A-Likes:

Small carpetgrass looks similar to deertongue grass (*Dicanthelium clandestinum*). Deertongue grass is slightly larger, covered with stiff hairs and the leaves are typically longer and more lanceolate in shape.



John Cardina, OSU