

Invasive Plants in Pennsylvania

Wavyleaf basketgrass

PA Noxious Weed

Oplismenus undulatifolius



WB in Patapsco Valley State Park, MD.
Kerrie Kyde, MD-DNR.

Background:

Wavyleaf basketgrass, an introduced sub-species of a native basketgrass (*O. hirtellus* (L.) P. Beauv.), is a fast spreading understory grass that forms dense stands in deciduous forests.

Range:

Wavyleaf basketgrass was first discovered in Howard County, MD in 1996. Documented locations have also been found in VA, and in 2016 it was discovered in PA. It is native to Europe and Asia.



Garrett Waugaman, M-NCPPC Weed Warriors, Bugwood.org

Description:

The leaf blades are flat, dark green, about 0.5 inches wide and 1.5 to four inches long, with rippling waves across the blade. The leaf sheaths and stems are noticeably hairy. When it blooms, from mid-September to November, the grass spikelets form long sticky awns.

Habitat:

This species is shade tolerant and does not tolerate sunny environments very well. It is mainly found in shaded, mesic deciduous forests.



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If You Find This Plant

Wavyleaf basketgrass is on the PA Noxious Weed List. It is a violation of the Noxious Weed Control Law to sell, transport, plant or otherwise propagate a listed species, like wavyleaf basketgrass, within the Commonwealth. If you believe that you have found a new population of this plant, please contact:
Botany/Weed Specialist
Pennsylvania Dept of Agriculture Phone: 717-787-7204

Biology and Spread:

It is unclear how wavyleaf basketgrass was first introduced to the U.S., but possibly was a contaminant of discarded hanging baskets.

It spreads quickly through rhizomatous means. In addition, the sticky awn on the seeds may adhere to passing animals, people or vehicles, allowing it to easily spread to new environments.

Ecological Threat:

This species can completely cover the forest floor, providing competition against native forest interior plant species. With the decrease in plant diversity, this species also provides very little wildlife value. Because this species is relatively new in the U.S., its ecological impacts are still mostly unknown.

How to Prevent its Spread:

In addition, cleaning your clothing and equipment before entering an uninfested area is a good measure to prevent unintended introduction of wavyleaf basketgrass.



Kerrie Kyde, MD-DNR, bugwood.org

Foliage of Wavyleaf basketgrass



Photo by: Kerrie L. Klyde, Maryland DNR

Wavyleaf basketgrass: bloom stalk, flowers with stigmas exerted



Photo by: Kerrie L. Klyde, Maryland DNR



Kerrie Kyde, MD-DNR, bugwood.org

Wavyleaf Basketgrass Treatment Guidance

Hand pulling (prior to seed-set) can be effective for controlling small patches of wavyleaf basketgrass. Once the plants have set seed, contact should be avoided to prevent the spread of the sticky seeds. Seeds can be removed from clothing and other gear with duct tape (see photo on first page).

If the infestation is too large for hand pulling, chemical treatments will work and should be applied before the plants have set seed. Two recommended herbicides are glyphosate and clethodim. The use of glyphosate products should be done with caution to avoid collateral damage to native plants on site, since it affects all plant species. Clethodim can be used on sites where desirable forbs and sedges are present, since it is grass-specific.

To date, there are no biological controls available for this species.