

COGON GRASS

Imperata cylindrica
Poaceae, the grass family
Category: EDRR

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FACTSHEET INFORMATION

Summary of Invasiveness

- Cogon Grass inhabits sites of soil disturbance such as roadsides, mining sites, borrow pits.
- It is capable of invading moist to dry upland pine sites.
- It forms monoculture fields by secreting substance to suppress other plants ability to grow.
- Ranked as the seventh worst weed in the world by USDA-APHIS in 2003.
- Flammable oils in this grass increase the intensity and severity of fires and lead to higher overstory tree mortality.

Description

- Cogon Grass will grow approximately 2 to 5 feet tall.
- It is a perennial grass with bright, yellowy-green foliage which rises from the base.
- The midvein of the leaf blades is clearly offset to one side, and the edges are serrated.
- The cream-colored rhizomes are hard and scaly with sharply pointed tips.
- The seed head is white and fuzzy.

Introduction and Movement

- Cogon Grass is native to South Africa and Southeastern Asia.
- This species was first introduced to the United States accidentally via packing materials sent to Louisiana in 1912.
- It was intentionally introduced for erosion control and livestock forage in Florida in the 1930s.
- It may spread through movement of contaminated soil with small pieces of rhizome or seed.

Prevention Strategy

- To prevent accidental introductions, learn how to identify Cogon grass and report any sightings.
- When gardening, always research plants before planting and only purchase seeds from licensed nurseries.
- Always remove and properly dispose of all seed and plant materials on vehicles, clothing, shoes and pets before you exit or enter outdoor recreational sites.
- Use care when removing plant materials as parts of the plant are poisonous. Contact your county weed superintendent for eradication options.
- Always Remember To: **KNOW WHAT YOU GROW & KNOCK IT OFF!**

Sources

- Florida Forest Service: fdacs.gov/Forest-Wildfire/Our-Forests/Forest-Health/Invasive-Non-Native-Plants/Cogon-Grass
- USDA: invasivespeciesinfo.gov/terrestrial/plants/cogongrass
- Virginia Invasive Species: invasivespeciesva.org/species/cogon-grass



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COGON GRASS DISTRIBUTION MAP

