

# JOHNSONGRASS

*Sorghum halepense*

Poaceae, the grass family

Category: Control

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## FACTSHEET INFORMATION

### Summary of Invasiveness

- Johnsongrass is an invasive grass that has an extensive spreading rhizome and shoot system and high rate of seed production making it very difficult to eradicate.
- The plant is toxic to livestock and infestations decrease biodiversity and reduce forage yields.
- It can increase fire risk, act as a host for crop pathogens, reduce soil fertility, and is a known allergen.

### Description

- Perennial grass growing up to 6 feet tall with a fibrous root system extending to depths of 4 feet.
- Flat, smooth leaf blades have prominent white mid-vein.
- Ribbed, hairless leaf sheaths have open overlapping margins and short, membranous ligule with terminal fringe of fine hairs.
- Large, open, pyramid shaped panicles have many shiny, reddish to purple spikelets.
- Oval shaped seeds are reddish brown to black.

### Introduction and Movement

- Johnsongrass is native to the Mediterranean region of Europe and Syria and was introduced in the 1800s by farmers for use as a forage crop.
- It inhabits cultivated fields, pastures, ditches, and roadsides.
- Seeds are easily dispersed by wind, water and human and animal vectors such as vehicles, and can also be spread as a contaminant in soil and crop seed.

### Prevention Strategy

- To prevent accidental introductions, learn how to identify Johnsongrass and eradicate infestations on your property.
- 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.
- Always Remember To:

**KNOCK IT OFF!**

#### Sources

- CABI Invasive Species Compendium: <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/50624>
- Idaho's Noxious Weeds 9th Edition, University of Idaho: <http://www.extension.uidaho.edu/publishing/pdf/BUL/BUL816.pdf>.



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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: [INVASIVESPECIES.IDAHO.GOV](http://INVASIVESPECIES.IDAHO.GOV)  
TO REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES IN IDAHO, PLEASE CALL 1-877-336-8676.

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## DISTRIBUTION MAP

