

HOW TO GET RID OF INVASIVE STILTGRASS

Mounds of Japanese stiltgrass are invading our roadsides and moving into our forests and home sites.

Stiltgrass leaves are lance-like, light green, with a shiny mid-rib. Stiltgrass typically grows in feathery mounds sometimes two or more feet high or flops over into dense mats. It thrives in different areas, from sun to shade, wet to dry, often starting in areas that have been disturbed or cleared. The seeds are readily carried or blown a good distance.

Stiltgrass is an invasive, meaning it moves in and chokes out native plants, thus changing habitat and affecting wildlife as well.

To minimize its spread or remove it:

- pull out small areas by hand (the roots are shallow), leaving in place the native plants to thrive.
- mow larger areas to control the growth and prevent new seeds from developing and spreading. This is best done in August, before the seeds are set. (If done earlier, a second crop may grow.) Mowing down to the ground will cause the roots and stems to die, as stiltgrass is an annual weed. Repeat this for several years to eliminate new crops that may grow from the many seeds already stored in the soil.
- Herbicides are not any more effective, as they will not kill seeds left in the soil, and also have the negative effect of killing all surrounding plants.