



Cogongrass in Georgia: Spring 2014 Update

Cogongrass will soon begin flowering in Georgia. Since January 1, 2014 there have been 20 new cogongrass detections in Georgia. All new sites are in the southwest region of the state. As daily temperatures continue to increase, cogongrass will initiate shoot growth and flowering very soon. Therefore, landowners are urged to survey their property, especially pine woodlands, for the presence of this exotic, invasive grass. To report a potential new cogongrass detection, contact your local Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) office or your Regional Forest Health Specialist. The GFC will continue spraying cogongrass in 2014 at no charge to the landowner.

How do you identify cogongrass flowers?

Cogongrass shoots are beginning to emerge. Therefore, it is time to begin looking for cogongrass in its flowering stage. The flowers are 2-8 inches in length; light, fluffy dandelion-like seeds that are white in color and cylindrical in shape. Flowering time is dependent on the local climate, but is usually present from late March through early June. The photos below show cogongrass flowering at its peak, dispersal period.



Besides flowering, what are key identification features?

Rhizomes: Dense mat, sharp pointed, covered in flaky scales, bright white under scales, strongly segmented.



Leaves: 2-5' long blades, ½-1 inch wide, off-centered white mid-rib, margins finely serrated, green yellowish-green in color in summer with a tan color in winter.

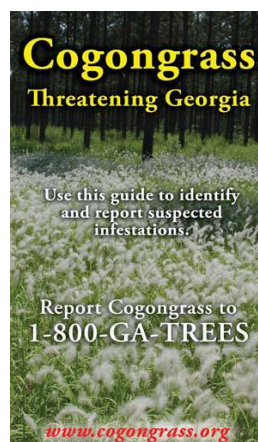
Circular growth pattern: Grass patch will normally grow in a circular pattern.



Cogongrass identification brochure and pocket ID available from the GFC:

Landowners are encouraged to spend time on their property searching for this invasive grass. Normally, cogongrass grows in circular patches. Identification brochures are available at your local Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) county office. Personnel from your local GFC office can make a positive identification on reported cogongrass finds.

Contact your local GFC County Office or Regional Forest Health Specialist to obtain copies of these two publications.



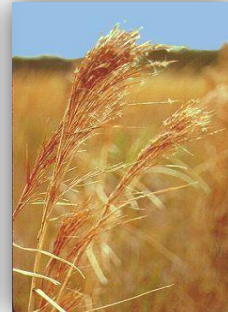
What other common grass species resemble cogongrass?

Vasey Grass: flower/seed head not fluffy, but loosely branched and spreading. Leaves arise from apparent stem. Base is thick and flattened, often with a reddish-purple color. Plant is very bunched in appearance. Contains a thin root system, not extensive and lacking thick, segmented rhizomes.



Silver Beardgrass: Looks very similar but often somewhat branched and blooms later in the year (June-August). Leaves are not serrated and arise from an apparent stem. The midrib is not as apparent. The plant base has a strongly bunched appearance, with apparent stems. Root system is fibrous, lacking rhizomes.

Broomsedge: Flower/seed head is thin and sparsely flowered, blooms in late summer. Leaves are thin and often curled, and arise from an apparent stem. The plant base has a strongly bunched appearance, with very apparent stems. The root system is fibrous, lacking rhizomes.



Johnsongrass: Flower/seed head is not fluffy, but loosely branched and spreading. Leaves are wider than cogongrass, edges are not serrate. The plant base is rounded, but very thick in comparison to cogongrass. The plant does not appear bunched. The rhizomes system is not as extensive. Rhizomes lack scaly coverings.

The information above was taken from the brochure entitled "Field Guide to the Identification of Cogongrass". Detailed descriptions along with color photo images are shown in the brochure.

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