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# Cooks Current

Newsletter

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## The View from Laughing Springs: Hans Reimann's notes on invasive species

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### Japanese Stilt Grass

This plant, *Microstegium vimineum*, is the fastest spreading invasive species in our watershed today. Although stilt grass is an annual, seed production from each plant can number in the hundreds, guaranteeing its return at least three springs in a row since seeds remain viable that long. In our watershed, man and animal (deer) are helping to spread the seeds to new areas, with disturbed areas most prone to infestation. Places as diverse as stream banks, moist forests, lawns and gardens are at risk. Storm water runoff can also spread stilt grass seeds to new areas. When a patch begins to take hold, its dense growth habit begins crowding out native wetland and forest vegetation in both full sun and deep shade habitat.

The plant is easy to pull, but be careful to remove roots because broken stems still rooted can grow again. Resembling a delicate bamboo, this grass can grow to about 2-3 feet with lance shaped pale green leaves about 3 inches in length. As with most grasses, seeds are produced usually on the tips of the plants, but sometimes stems can produce seeds. So the best time to weed out this invader is before the end of summer, before seeds are produced.

In our watershed this plant can sometimes be found growing together with other bad plants such as garlic mustard and other Asian kin such as Japanese wineberry or honeysuckle. I am researching this new phenomenon of invasives, growing together in cozy relationships. More about that at a later date. Good Hunting!