

# Johnsongrass



**BOTANICAL NAME:** *Sorghum halepense*

**WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?** This perennial grass grows up to 7 feet tall. The leaf blades are roughly 1 inch wide and can be 24 inches long. It produces a distinctive large "arrow head" or "pyramid" shaped seed head. The seeds start out greenish yellow but mature to a dark red or purple.

**WHERE DOES IT LIKE TO GROW?** It invades river banks, roadsides, disturbed ground, and fallow fields. Once established it pushes out desirable vegetation.

**WHEN DOES IT BLOOM?** It flowers from May to October.

**WHAT TYPE OF ROOT SYSTEM?** Johnsongrass has thick creeping rhizomes that spread laterally.

**HOW DOES IT SPREAD?** It reproduces both by seed which remain viable for 20 years and by creeping rhizomes. A single plant's root system can spread into a colony 200 feet wide.

**HOW DO I CONTROL IT?** Any control efforts need to be aimed at killing the growing points in the

root system. See the reverse side for detailed information on mechanical, cultural, biological and chemical control of Johnsongrass. Also see our Chemical Treatment handout for more information on using herbicides.

**WANT TO KNOW MORE? – Call:**

**Kootenai County Noxious Weed Control**  
**10905 N. Ramsey Road**  
**Hayden, ID 83835**  
**208-446-1290**

**kcnoxiousweeds@kcgov.us or [www.kcweeds.com](http://www.kcweeds.com)**

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# How to Control Johnsongrass

Johnsongrass is a Perennial plant that reproduces not only by seed but also vegetatively through rhizomes and tillers.

**Mechanical** Hand pulling is ineffective unless all rhizomes are removed, which is very difficult because they break easily. Repeated close mowing can control seedlings and new infestations, but not established plants. Repeated tillage, at least every two weeks throughout the season, can be effective preventing rhizome development and reducing infestations.

**Cultural** The best long term weed control is to get your desirable native plants thriving. Killing weeds is only one step, you have to also replace them with something good. Seed and fertilize so your grass can take nutrients away from the weeds and not leave available open soil for new weeds to germinate.

**Biological** There are no biological agents currently available for control of Johnsongrass.

**Chemical** \*Chemical treatment of creeping perennials must target the root system in order to be effective. Killing only the top growth with an herbicide such as 2,4-D will not reduce your infestation. See our Chemical Treatment handout for more information.

- **Clethodim** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Select 2EC**. It is grass selective and can be effective against Johnsongrass if applied when it reaches 12-24 inches tall. Follow up treatments will probably be required.
- **Imazapic** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Plateau**. It is non-selective and can be effective on Johnsongrass if applied during the early bloom stage.
- **Rimsulfuron** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Matrix**. It is non-selective and can be effective on Johnsongrass if applied during the seedling stage.
- **Glyphosate** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **RoundUp, Honcho, Gly-Star**, etc. It is non-selective and can be effective on Johnsongrass if applied while the plants are growing rapidly and at least 18 inches tall.