

**Scientific Name:** *Miscanthus spp.*

**Common Name:** Chinese Silvergrass

*Updated: 5/5/2016*

**A. Priority: C**

**Description** – *Miscanthus sinensis* is a robust perennial plant that can reach up to 10 feet in height. It is usually found in large clumps. It consists of long arching branches and leaves that spread or droop. The leaves can be up to 3 feet long and 1 inch wide. Each leaf has a silvery-white midrib with sharp tips that are re-curving. Mature plants have large, showy, feather-like flowers appearing in Sept.-Oct. It has very short, inconspicuous rhizomes. Pinkish-silvery 8-10" plumes remain into the winter. It turns a rich golden brown in the winter and the color persists throughout the season.

**B. Damage and threats** – *Miscanthus sinensis* will grow on a variety of habitats but prefers full sun and moist, well-drained soil. Although it is intolerant of shade, it can survive in sparsely forested areas. This grass has the ability to form extensive infestations within disturbed sites and forest margins and is particularly prevalent along roadsides in the western piedmont and mountains of North Carolina.

**C. Management Options**

**Mechanical Control:**

Repeated mowing, as short as possible throughout the growing season will kill Silvergrass usually in 2 seasons. But areas where there is a seed bank may require several years of mowing. At least 2 mowings per year should be done, ideally monthly. Cutting the plants back in late winter or when dormant will provide NO control and can actually enhance growth if the cuttings are removed, similar to haying. Burning will increase growth and should never be used as a control method on this species.

**Chemical Control:** Chemical spraying of the cut surfaces after cutting plants back (often recommended for controlling woody plants) is NOT an effective way to control Silvergrass. An adequate amount of actively growing green foliage should be present for good chemical control. We recommend using aquatic formulations of herbicides in this region to limit potentially unwanted effects to the surrounding environment.

- a. Foliar Spray** – This method involves spraying a dilute herbicide directly onto the plants leaves. Application needs to occur when foliage is present, sometime between full leaf and the onset of fall for full effectiveness. Caution should be taken when applying herbicide with this method as non-target plants can easily be killed by drift or overspray. Application should cover at least 80% of the leaves.  
To treat Chinese Silvergrass, use a 3-4% solution of aquatic glyphosate in water with a 0.5% non-ionic surfactant and apply directly to leaves until just before runoff. Air temperatures must be above 65 degrees and winds should be lower than 5 mph.

#### **D. Recommended Management Strategy**

- a.** We recommend mowing or weed-eating this species monthly for two years if the terrain allows it. Otherwise, cutting the above ground vegetation prior to seed onset and then foliar spraying as directed above once the foliage has adequately regrown.
- b.** Repeat mowing and foliar applications should be conducted at least yearly to ensure control and minimize spread.

#### **E. Additional and Updated Information**

For additional information including photographs and the most up to date control recommendations please visit [www.wachng.org/Plants](http://www.wachng.org/Plants).