

- Do not bring any equipment to your hunting area unless it has been thoroughly cleaned BEFORE it enters your area. This includes tractors, RTV's, trailers, cultivation attachments and vehicles. Cleaning includes removing all soil and plant materials and cleaning all grills, radiators and screens.



Cogongrass flower heads stuck in radiator grill. Photo by Mark Atwater, Weed Control Unlimited, Inc. Bugwood.org.

- Plant food plots with known seeds sources.
- Use only hay materials from areas not infested with cogongrass.
- Make certain nursery stock such as oak and fruit trees do not have any grass-like plant materials with bare-root or potted saplings.

The Department of Plant Industries at Clemson University is charged with the eradication of cogongrass. They have treated all reported infestations and continue to monitor these areas and retreat them as necessary. Eradication of cogongrass will require an aggressive campaign and depends on landowners, land users such as hunters,

and the public to help locate and report places where they find the grass.

There is nothing in the natural landscape that will stop cogongrass from spreading. We presently have only a small amount of it in South Carolina, and we need to keep it that way. We want to keep this weed from devastating South Carolina's wildlife habitat.

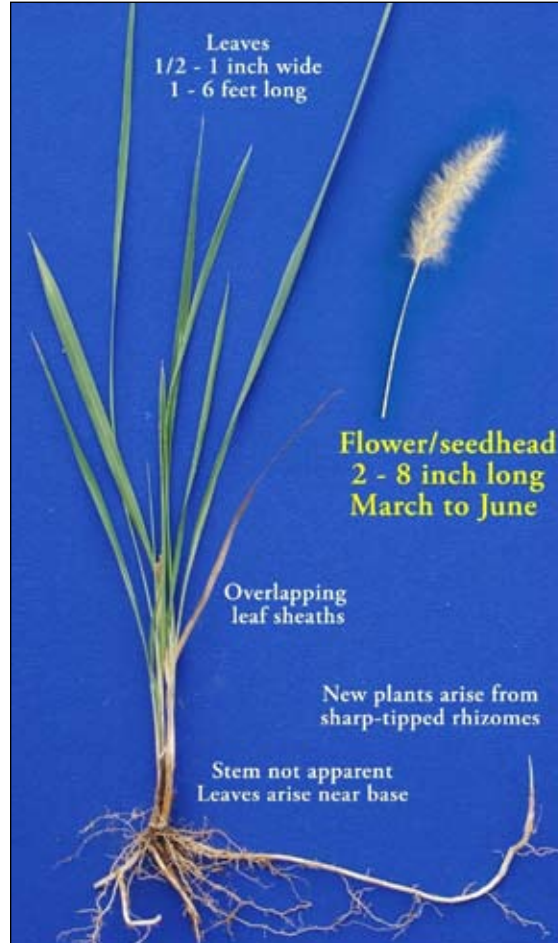


Photo by Chris Evans, River to River CWMA, Bugwood.org

Cogongrass web site:  
[www.clemson.edu/for/cogon.html](http://www.clemson.edu/for/cogon.html)

The Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to people of all ages, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or disability and is an equal opportunity employer.  
 Clemson University Cooperating with United States Department of Agriculture, South Carolina Counties.  
 Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914.

# COGONGRASS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

## Information for Hunters

**CLEMSON**  
 EXTENSION

Photo by Chris Evans, River to River CWMA, Bugwood.org.

# COGONGRASS IN SOUTH CAROLINA: INFORMATION FOR HUNTERS

South Carolina is faced with an invasive plant species that many people feel is far worse than kudzu. The plant, cogongrass, is considered to be one of the ten worst weeds in the world. We already have more cogongrass than kudzu in the South. Cogongrass was accidentally introduced near Mobile, Alabama around 1911 as seed in packing materials from Japan. The plant began to grow and seemed to have promise for forage production and erosion control and was planted in Alabama, Mississippi and Florida. People soon recognized that cogongrass was a poor forage plant and could become a serious pest. Today the plant is on the Federal noxious weed list which prohibits new plantings. Unfortunately, there are cultivars which are still produced and sold in some states. All forms of cogongrass are illegal in South Carolina.

Cogongrass is estimated to infest more than a million acres in Florida, Alabama and Mississippi. It has also been found in Louisiana, Georgia, South Carolina, Texas,



A field of flowering cogongrass. Photo by Charles T. Bryson, USDA Agricultural Research Service; Bugwood.org.

and Tennessee. Cogongrass has been found in nine counties in South Carolina.

Cogongrass spreads primarily from rhizomes and windborne seeds. The seeds are in white flower heads which generally appear in May and June and are 2 to 3 inches long. A single plant can produce thousands of seeds each year. The small, fluffy seeds can be dispersed several miles by wind.



This small piece of rhizome can produce three cogongrass plants. Photo by Wilson Faircloth, USDA Agricultural Research Service. Bugwood.org

Disturbing the soil where the plant grows can create many small pieces of rhizomes. Each of these pieces can develop into a fully functional

plant. Small rhizome pieces are easily transported from site to site and result in moving the grass and expanding its range.

New patches of cogongrass develop as circular patches that grow larger over time.



A new patch of cogongrass. Photo by Charles T. Bryson, USDA Agricultural Research Service. Bugwood.org.

Most of the spread of the patch is from rhizome growth that continues to explore new areas. The result is a thick patch of grass that crowds out other vegetation and only allows existing vegetation that is taller than cogongrass to exist. Left unchecked, this aggressive plant forms dense stands over large areas and can virtually eliminate native plants. Cogongrass is mostly unpalatable to livestock and wildlife, and can create a significant fire hazard.

## What can you do to help prevent the spread of cogongrass?

- Learn what cogongrass looks like and be on the lookout for it.
- Report any suspected infestation to your Cooperative Extension Service Agent or State Forester.
- Do not mow through or near areas with cogongrass, especially if it is flowering, as this may aid in dispersing the seeds.
- Do not do any soil work, such as disking or grading, in or near areas with cogongrass. You could carry fragments of roots to other areas and spread this weed.



Rhizomes or seeds can be spread to new areas on tractors and other equipment. Photo by David J. Moorhead, University of Georgia. Bugwood.org.