



Invasive Plant Alert¹

Wavyleaf basketgrass

Oplismenus hirtellus (L.) P. Beauv.
ssp. *undulatifolius* (Ard.) U.
Scholz



Figure 1. Kerrie L. Kyde, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Bugwood.org

Where to Look

Wavyleaf basketgrass is highly shade-tolerant and remains green until late fall. Once established, it spreads rapidly and forms a dense carpet layer in the forest understory, crowding out native plants and preventing regeneration of native hardwood tree species. It is believed to be more invasive than Japanese stiltgrass, and is often found growing together in some forested areas. It is most active in moist areas but actively spreads in upland areas as well, and persists during dry periods.

It was first discovered in Maryland in 1996 and has since been found in several Maryland and Virginia counties. It is believed to be spreading in the Baltimore Washington Metropolitan area. It originated in southeast Asia.

Identifying the Plant

Wavyleaf basketgrass is a low-growing, shallow-rooted

perennial grass that produces long shoots that branch and root at the lower stem nodes. The leaves are flat and deep green with undulating ripples across the leaf surface (about ½ inch wide by 1½-4 inches long). The leaf sheath and stem are covered with short hairs.



Figure 2. Infestation. Kerrie L. Kyde, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Bugwood.org

Flowers are in spikelets that alternate along the flowering stalk, with glumes (lower bracts) and very long awns (extended pointed tips) that are sticky. This sticky surface adheres to fur, skin, clothing, shoes, and tires - allowing for seed dispersal. It blooms in late September and into October.

Wavyleaf basketgrass has two conspecifics (*O. h. fasciculatus* and *O. h. setarius*) found in southern U.S. but they are not known to occur in the mid-Atlantic. Wavyleaf basketgrass resembles native deer-tongue panicgrass (*Dicanthelium clandestinum*) and small carpetgrass (*Arthraxon hispidus*). They grow in upright clumps with leaves not rippled. Variegated varieties of basketgrass may be sold

ornamentally. There are reports that there may be disagreement about whether wavyleaf basketgrass is a unique species or a reverted cultivar.



Figure 3. Bloom stalk, flowers with stigmas exerted Kerrie L. Kyde, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Bugwood.org

How to get rid of it?

Control by hand-pulling before seed set. Avoid infested areas from August through November to prevent seed dispersal. Be careful to remove all seeds from shoes, clothing and equipment prior to leaving an infested area, and dispose of properly. Several different herbicides are being tested. Do not purchase or plant this or any basketgrass in the mid-Atlantic states.

Resources

Maryland Department of Natural Resources,
www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/WLBG/index.asp

USDA, APHIS, Weed Risk Assessment for *Oplismenus hirtellus* (L.) P. Beauv. subsp. *undulatifolius* (Ard.) U. Scholz (Poaceae) – Wavyleaf basketgrass, June 2012

¹ This species has been identified as a potential or emerging threat to natural areas in the mid-Atlantic region