

2023 Japanese Stiltgrass Summary



Japanese stiltgrass is an invasive annual plant that is a threat to our forest floors. Currently, stiltgrass is found in a few locations in Vermont. To prevent its spread, the Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District (WVNRCD) implemented an early detection and rapid response for stiltgrass in the summer of 2023. This included assessing sites with known stiltgrass populations, creating promotional materials, holding educational workshops, and visiting newly identified populations. In this report, the WCNRCD provides a summary of each site, outreach efforts made, and recommendations for next steps.

This project was funded by the Silvio O. Conte National Wildlife Refuge.



Historic sites:

Crosby street, Brattleboro:



In previous years, lawns along Crosby street had a considerable amount of stiltgrass. Starting in June, the area along Crosby street was surveyed and only one stiltgrass plant was detected.

To raise awareness about stiltgrass early in the summer, an outreach event on stiltgrass identification was held in June. As stiltgrass was difficult to detect due to its short size, and lack of identifiable characteristics (such as leaf stripe), example images and sealed samples were used as teaching tools. No stiltgrass was identified onsite at this event, however site visits were scheduled with attendees to determine if they had stiltgrass on their property.

NEIGHBORHOOD WALK



Learn about the invasive Japanese stiltgrass growing in your neighborhood on a walk with the Southeast Vermont Cooperative Invasive Species Management Association (CISMA). The walk will begin at the Retreat Farm WOODLAND TRAIL HEAD.

14 JUNE
5:00 - 7:00 PM



To register, scan the QR code or visit:
www.eventbrite.com/e/stilt-grass-neighborhood-walk-tickets-64952447627
Call: 802-689-3024
Email: sevtcisma@gmail.com

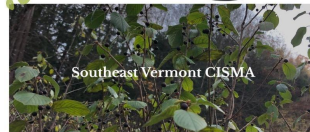


www.sevtcisma.org



STILTGRASS MONITORING

11 AUGUST
10:00 AM



Scan for stiltgrass info:



Join with members of the Southeast Vermont Cooperative Invasive Species Management Association (CISMA) to monitor stiltgrass in Brattleboro! We will meet at Crosby street off of Western Avenue. Register by emailing sullivan.wcnrcd@gmail.com, call 802-689-3024, or Scan the QR code:

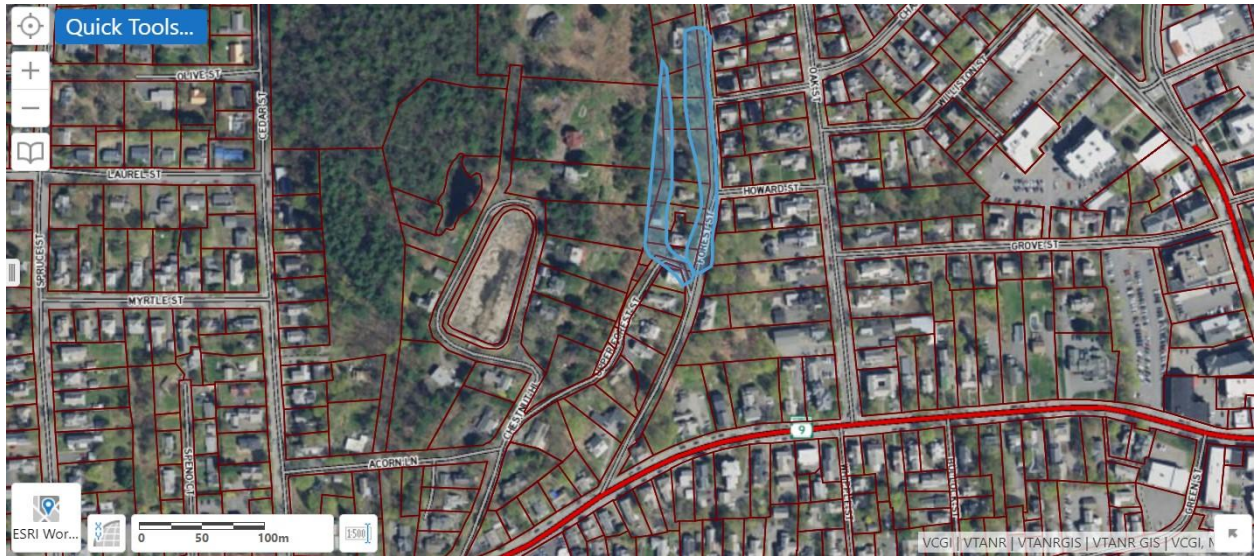


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The Crosby street area was revisited in August during a second workshop, geared towards identification and manual removal. At the workshop, all stiltgrass plants seen were removed; enough to fill a small paper bag (approximately 8 x 4 X 10 in). Additionally, an attendee allowed the WCNRCD and Got weeds? to visit their property and identify a new patch of stiltgrass.

Thorn lane, Brattleboro:



For multiple years, the area near Thorn lane was densely covered by stiltgrass. The majority of the grassy lot and nearby parking areas at the end of Thorn lane is stiltgrass and is likely being spread by vehicles.

This year, manual removal started in July and continued monthly. Each visit resulted in multiple paper bags filled with stiltgrass. Manual pulling at this site at this rate requires multiple visits throughout the growing season. The stiltgrass germination times vary widely, and therefore cannot be pulled with a couple of visits.

Michael Bald of Got weeds? spoke with many neighbors to raise awareness of stiltgrass. He coordinated with one neighbor who offered to burn bags of removed stiltgrass in their fire pit. In addition, Michael spoke with the propane delivery person on this route. The propane tank at the end of Thorn is surrounded by stiltgrass. As the propane truck maneuvers the grassy lot filled with stiltgrass to deliver propane, it is vital that the propane company is aware of the transmission possibilities.

Monthly scoping of the area around Thorn lane found stiltgrass in small clumps along Forest street and multi-yard coverage of stiltgrass on Ebby drive.



Tater Road, Guilford:



Previously, a stiltgrass site was identified near Tater Road in Guilford. In 2022, approximately five trash bags full of stiltgrass were removed off of a forest access road. The landowners were advised to inform their forester to develop a control plan. No updates were received in 2023 about progress at this site. Next steps at this site are to establish a removal schedule with the landowners.

Sites Identified in 2023:

Washington street, Brattleboro:



Resulting from the June workshop, a site visit was scheduled in September with a landowner on their property near Washington street. This site is south of the Whetstone brook, which is the first documentation of stiltgrass in that area. At this site, stiltgrass is present throughout the lawn area and near a storm drain. The owner is interested in removal and educating nearby neighbors on stiltgrass.



North of Creamery bridge, Brattleboro:



A new stiltgrass site was identified in September along Route 9, near the Creamery bridge. At this site, the landowner confirmed that stiltgrass has been present for multiple years. Stiltgrass covers the majority of the lawn, but is not found along the nearby stream. No stiltgrass was found near the roadway. Unmowed stiltgrass has grown up to 5 feet in height within the garden area. The owner is interested in using a variety of treatments (such as a vinegar-based treatment) to rid the property of stiltgrass.

Route 5, Putney:



On Putney town land, stiltgrass was identified in September along Route 5 and into town forest land. The patch along route 5 is approximately 25 feet in length and is very dense. Manual removal is potentially dangerous given the proximity to Route 5. Flame weeding was



recommended but was determined to be not permissible. Due to the roadside location, this site is of high concern due to the difficulty of removal and the ability of roadside spread.

The stiltgrass patch in the town forest was approximately 15 feet wide and 15 feet long with short (under 2 inches) plants. All stiltgrass seen was manually removed in three visits.

Griswold Drive, Bellows Falls:



A site visit in October found a small patch of stiltgrass on Griswold Drive, in Bellows Falls. This patch is on the side of a steep embankment. Follow-up visits are needed to determine the size of this patch. Additionally, the town needs to be notified of the presence of stiltgrass.

Recommended next steps:

The WCNRCDC will apply for future funding to monitor known stiltgrass sites, raise awareness of stiltgrass through outreach and education, and identify unknown stiltgrass sites. Future monitoring plans will include repeated visits throughout the growing season to manually remove stiltgrass. The best times to identify stiltgrass prior to seed production was July and August. The WCNRCDC worked on several ways to educate Windham County on stiltgrass. The WCNRCDC created and shared a video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9ExUfDHClg>) to educate people on identifying stiltgrass. Using iNaturalist (a free, publicly-accessible software), all known sites were mapped in Windham County. The public can add to these observations to expand our current map of stiltgrass locations. The WCNRCDC will also contact landowners of known stiltgrass sites to offer support and track stiltgrass removal progress.

In order to continue Early Detection and Rapid Response for stiltgrass in Windham County, committed funding for this effort must be made. Plans to stop the spread of stiltgrass must consider a variety of treatment plans and outreach efforts. As stiltgrass is spread by foot traffic on trails, proper education and outreach on stiltgrass is imperative. Stiltgrass can also be spread by disturbing natural areas, river corridors, vehicular traffic, and mowing. Given these mediums of spread, it is imperative that towns in Windham County work with road crews on curbing the stiltgrass populations along right-of-ways.

Additionally, control and disposal methods for stiltgrass need to be addressed. Manual removal requires multiple site visits throughout the growing season. Given the extensiveness of



some sites, WCNRCD is interested in exploring flame weeding as a control in areas where it is safe and permissible. Additional control options include a low (0.01%) glyphosate solution and vinegar-based treatment. Improper disposal can result in new stiltgrass populations. The best disposal method is burning the material, however this is not possible at most sites. Further discussion is needed with towns on how stiltgrass can safely be disposed of.

