



Invasive Species Leaflet



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Miscanthus sinensis (Chinese silvergrass)

Initial Introduction and Expansion in Range



Miscanthus sinensis is native to eastern Asia throughout China, Japan, and Korea. It was introduced to the United States about a century ago as an ornamental and is still widely sold for this purpose. It has been introduced or has spread throughout the eastern United States from Florida to Texas, north to Massachusetts and New York, and Colorado and Texas. In North Carolina, *M. sinensis* is most prevalent in the western portion of the state.

Miscanthus sinensis reproduces through wind-dispersed seeds and rhizomes. This grass can form extensive infestations by escaping from established ornamental plantings into disturbed areas where it forms dense clumps that displace native vegetation. Since it is highly flammable, *M. sinensis* is notorious for being a fire hazard.

Description and Biology

- Tall, perennial, densely bunched grass 5 to 10 feet in height.
- Elongated, upright to arching leaves 3 feet long and 1 inch wide with whitish upper midrib. The leaves have sharp tips and rough margins.
- Blades are green to variegated (light green horizontal stripes).
- Showy, fan-shaped, silvery to pink, terminal inflorescence that emerges in late August to early September and matures in early fall.



Habitats Susceptible to Invasion

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.

Prevention and Control

The widespread sale and use of *M. sinensis* as an ornamental grass ensures the continued spread of this plant. When it escapes to natural areas, infestations should be controlled as soon as possible since the ability of *M. sinensis* to sprout from pieces of rhizome makes it difficult to control. Unless the entire rhizome system is killed, re-growth will occur the next year.

Miscanthus sinensis has been effectively controlled with a 2 to 3 percent solution of glyphosate and 0.5 percent non-ionic surfactant in the late summer before the plant sets seed.

**THE LABEL IS THE LAW!
WHEN USING ANY PESTICIDE, FOLLOW ALL LABEL
INSTRUCTIONS**

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Miscanthus sinensis photography by Karen M. Lynch, NCDOT (left) and Cheri Smith, NCDOT (right).

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