

**Welcome to
my weekly
series!**



Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

ask the landscape professional

SEND ME YOUR QUESTIONS ... I will do my best to address the ones of most general interest. Email or mail your questions to: info@sprigsandtwigs.net or Linda Lillie, Sprigs & Twigs Inc, PO Box 245, Gales Ferry, CT 06335

Linda's Question of this Week:

What can be done to control Japanese Stilt Grass?

- Ralph

Linda's Answer:

Japanese Stilt Grass (*Microstegium vimineum*) is an annual, invasive grass. This means the plant goes through its entire life cycle in one year and dies completely at the end of the season. Its return the following year is highly dependent on the seeds that are produced the year before. Japanese Stilt Grass is native to China, Japan, India and throughout Eastern Asia. It first showed up in the U.S. in the early 1900's in Knoxville, Tennessee, where it had been unpacked from crates where it had been used as lightweight packing material for fine China porcelain coming from Eastern China. Today, it has spread from Florida to New England and as far west as Texas. It first appeared in Connecticut in the early 1980's and in Massachusetts in the late 1990's.

Japanese Stilt Grass can grow more than 3 feet tall and its leaves can get to 3 inches in length. Each plant can create as many as 1000 seeds each year (late in the year) which is why it is so invasive.

Since Japanese Stilt Grass has shallow roots, it can be easily pulled throughout the growing season, a task that gets easier at this time of year when the plants are tall. Do not mow it early in the summer because you will encourage new growth. You can mow it this time of year, before it creates its seeds in October. If the Japanese Stilt Grass is in your lawn, it helps to

over-seed your lawn in the fall with a high quality seed mixture to help crowd out the Japanese Stilt Grass. Please do not use any kind of chemical to control the Japanese Stilt Grass. Learning the growth pattern of the plant helps tremendously in getting rid of it. Using any kind of chemicals on the lawn causes so many more problems. Chemicals affect the growth of the lawn grass because you will also kill the important microbes that live in the soil that help your lawn grass thrive.

As part of good lawn turf management practices, we are coming up on the time of year you should be soil testing, aerating, over-seeding and dethatching (if necessary). Most needed equipment can be rented from rental stores, or Sprigs & Twigs can provide those services to you. Give us a call.



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Linda K. Lillie is the President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc, the premier landscape tree care & lawn care company in SE Connecticut for the last 18 years. She is a graduate of Connecticut College in Botany, a Connecticut Master Gardener and a national award winning landscape designer for her design and installation work.

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