



Battling Cogongrass in Alabama

Impact Statement

The Problem/Issue:

Cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*), also known as jangrass, has become a serious problem for landowners, timber growers and rights-of-way managers in southwest Alabama since its introduction into the port of Mobile in the early 1900s. It not only competes with native vegetation, but presents a severe fire hazard to timber plantations and industrial sites.

Cogongrass is possibly the worst of the invasive exotic plants that plague Alabama. Cogongrass spreads by wind-blown seeds and underground creeping rhizomes. Its spread was assisted unintentionally by mowers along Interstate 10, and it can now be found as far west as Baton Rouge and as far east as Tallahassee. Conservative estimates put cogongrass-infested acreage between 500,000 and 1,000,000 acres in Alabama, Mississippi and northwest Florida. Cogongrass has been found in 32 Alabama counties, but it is especially thick in Mobile, Baldwin, Washington, Choctaw, Clarke, Monroe, Escambia and Conecuh counties.

What's Been Done:

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System hosted a Cogongrass Eradication Demonstration Day in Baldwin County to show the effects of management practices on this highly invasive and destructive weed. A team of Extension personnel and industry representatives provided information on the control and management of cogongrass to a diverse audience of public officials, timber industry representatives and local landowners. Classroom in the Forest volunteers also attended the demonstration. These volunteers give presentations to fourth, fifth and sixth graders about forestry and wildlife and lead field days for those students at Baldwin County TREASURE Forests. One of the topics they cover is invasive exotic species.

Participants reviewed the results from last year's Cogongrass Eradication Demonstration. No cogongrass had come back in a year after spraying.

A new publication, "Wanted Dead Not Alive: Cogongrass," that presents information on recognition and control was provided to all attendees.

Why We Care:

Timber companies, local governments and local landowners need guidance to battle a growing invasive weed problem. Extension has provided the latest research and management practices to these people—providing them with effective tools to manage and eradicate cogongrass.