

# INVASIVE EXOTICS

## Chinese Silver Grass

*Miscanthus sinensis*

Grass Family (Poaceae)

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**What does it look like?** Miscanthus, native to eastern Asia, is a hardy perennial grass. It grows in dense, bushy, upright, and arching clumps 6 ft. to 10 ft. tall. The leaf blades, with a distinctive whitish midrib, are 3-1/2 ft. long and less than an inch wide, with sharp, recurving, slender tips. The silky, plume-like terminal panicle is 6 in. to 24 in. long, silvery to pale, pink and showiest in autumn.

**What habitats are threatened by this plant?** Miscanthus spreads to disturbed sites along roadsides, woodland borders and clearings within wooded areas. It is found in pockets throughout the eastern U.S. from Florida to Texas, and north to Massachusetts and New York. Several states have placed miscanthus on their list of plants to watch for invasive potential. More information is needed on the movement and invasive potential of this ornamental grass.

**How does this plant spread?** Miscanthus is widely sold and planted as an ornamental grass in many landscapes. It spreads by seeds that are wind-dispersed, and also by rhizomes.

**How can it be controlled?** Refrain from putting this plant in the landscape. Instead, use native ornamental grasses such as blue switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum* 'Heavy Metal'), prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) and tufted hair grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*). Spot-treatment with a glyphosate herbicide such as Roundup, in spring when the new shoots are 4" to 6" tall, is effective. Follow label directions when applying any herbicide. This treatment may be continued periodically until flowering. Since miscanthus spreads by rhizomes, be sure to spot-treat new shoots arising from the base of the plant.

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