U.S. National Early Detection and Rapid Response System for Invasive Plants
EDRR Fact Sheet

Randy G. Westbrooks, Whiteville, North Carolina. USA.

**Common Name:** Wavyleaf Basketgrass

**Scientific Name:** Oplismenus hirtellus (L.) P. Beauv.
Subspecies undulatifolius (Ard.) Roem. & Schult.

**Family:** Poaceae

**Description:** A shade tolerant, low-growing, stoloniferous perennial grass, from 20-30 cm tall. Leaves ovate, elongated, sharply pointed, dark green, 0.5” wide, 1.5-4” long, with rippling waves across the leaf blades. **Leaf sheaths and stems** noticeably hairy with very short hairs*. Grass spikelets with long sticky awns, flowering from mid-September to November. The sticky awns allow the grass seeds to adhere to passing animals, people, and vehicles. **Stolons** delicate, 1-3 mm in diameter, creeping beneath leaf litter, rooting and branches from nodes.

*Oplismenus hirtellus ssp. setarius*, which is native to the southeastern U.S. and Mexico, and is the closest relative of Wavyleaf basketgrass, has only a few hairs if any on the leaf sheaths and stems.

WLGB is similar in appearance to Japanese stiltgrass *[Microstegium vimineum* (Trin.) Camus], an introduced annual grass which also invades forest under stories throughout the eastern U.S. However, the leaves of Japanese stiltgrass have a silvery row of hairs running down the midvein and end in a blunt gradual point. WLGB leaves are rippled across their width and end with an elongated sharp tip.

**Habitat:** Temperate environments in Coastal Plain, Piedmont, and Montane regions; full canopy hardwood forests, forest margins, and shady riparian zones; does not tolerate direct sunlight; appears adaptable to a wide range of pH.

**Native Range:** Europe and Asia.

**Pathways of Introduction and Spread:** It is unclear how WLGB was first introduced to the U.S. It is possible that the plant was a contaminant of discarded hanging baskets in Maryland. Variegated varieties of native bristle basketgrass are sold by plant nurseries in the Mid-Atlantic Region. However, WLGB is not known to be sold in the horticultural trade.

WLGB was first discovered in the U.S. in **Patapsco Valley State Park**, Howard County, MD, by botanist Edward Uebel in 1996. In 2000, it was found growing along a woody stream at the **Hernwood Sanitary Landfill**, Baltimore County, MD.

**U.S. and Canada Distribution:** WLGB is known to occur in Maryland and Virginia, USA.
**Ecological and Economic Impacts:** Once it becomes established, WLBG spreads rapidly through wooded natural areas – crowding out native herbaceous plants, and preventing regeneration of native hardwood tree species. Unless it is completely eradicated soon, it will continue to spread and will have a devastating impact on the deciduous forests of eastern North America for many decades to come.

**Prevention Measures:** Since 2006, volunteers with the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS) have been working to detect and eradicate WLBG from MD and VA. In 2006, AWS volunteers discovered and began eradicating a three acre infestation in Little Paint Branch Park, Prince George’s County, MD. In 2007, several small colonies and patches of the plant were detected and treated in the Beltsville Area Research Center-West, Prince George’s County, MD. In 2008, AWS led the effort to establish the Wavyleaf Basketgrass Task Force. The task force is focused on mapping and eradication of known infestations, and a public awareness campaign to help detect and report other infestations before they become widespread.

**Physical Control:** WLBG is easily hand pulled at the roots and nodes. Hand pulling is thought to be more effective than herbicide treatment when the population is small enough for weeding (Westbrooks & Imlay, 2009; Wavyleaf Basketgrass Task Force, 2009).

**Chemical Control:** WLBG may be effectively treated with a 1-2% solution of glyphosate. Current populations in Maryland (USA) and Virginia are still relatively small and eradication is still possible. General weed killers such as *Roundup* work best late in the year, while grass inhibitors such as *Envoy Plus* (cl methodim) are more effective early in the season.

**Regulatory Status:** Wavyleaf basketgrass is currently not regulated at the local, state, or federal level in the U.S.

**Online Resources:**

- WLBG Fact Sheet – Randy Westbrooks and Marc Imlay, 2009.
  URL: [http://www.se-eppc.org/southcarolina/WLBG.pdf](http://www.se-eppc.org/southcarolina/WLBG.pdf)


- WLBG Profile - Global Invasive Species Database – ISSG.


- WLBG Images - U-GA Bugwood Image Gallery.
  URL: [http://www.invasive.org/species/subject.cfm?sub=21294](http://www.invasive.org/species/subject.cfm?sub=21294)

- WLBG Profile - USDA Plants Database.

- WLBG in Virginia - Virginia Department of Forestry.