

Digitaria ciliaris

Recognize the problem

Family: Poaceae (grass family).

Common names: Southern crabgrass;

Burmese: Let-the-gwa-myet.

Annual grass, typically lying along the ground, with the tips curving upward; it roots at the nodes, forming scruffy patches up to 1m across and 50cm high; when crowded will grow 1m tall.

Leaves: Up to 25 cm long and 1 cm wide; leaf sheaths and lower parts of leaves hairy.

Flowers and fruit: Flowers at top of long shoots taller than the foliage; made-up of 2-9, 5-10 cm long branches ('fingers') bearing the seed.

Background

Origin: Uncertain, but believed to be Asia.

Introduction: As a forage/haymaking crop; planted for erosion control and dune stabilization.

Habitat: Global across tropical and subtropical regions. Colonises degraded or disturbed environments; grows in full sun or partial shade on dry to moist soils.

Spread: Predominantly by seed spread by wind, water, on livestock and as a contaminant of crop seeds; the weed roots at each node therefore also as plant fragments transported by machinery, vehicles and as a contaminant of soil.

Invades: Annual and perennial crops including pasture; abundant on roadsides and wasteland.

Impacts: Important weed, mainly in Asia, affecting a wide range of crops (groundnut, cotton, rice, maize, sorghum, vegetables, pineapple, cassava and tea). An aggressive weed which competes particularly for nitrogen. It is suspected to have allelopathic effects suppressing the growth of other plants. There is evidence that *D. ciliaris* can deplete potassium in soils, resulting in reduced crop yields. The weeds is an alternative host for many crop pests and diseases including rice stripe virus and rice black-streaked dwarf virus, pangola stunt virus of sugarcane, sugarcane mosaic virus, maize streak virus and sorghum plantbug *Stenotus rubrovittatus*.

Whole plant including inflorescence.
(Photo by F. Starr & K. Starr)



Growth habit of *D. ciliaris*. (Photo by F. Starr & K. Starr)



Scientific name(s) > *Digitaria ciliaris*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: All Countries



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