



Japanese Chaff Flower - *Achyranthes japonica* (Miq.) Nakai



Flowering Plant

A new exotic species has been found in southern Illinois. Japanese chaff flower, *Achyranthes japonica* (Amaranthaceae), is a perennial herbaceous plant that is native to Eastern Asia. It was first found in the United States in eastern Kentucky in the early 1980s and has quickly spread along the Ohio River and tributaries. It is currently found in seven states (Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, and Tennessee). In Illinois, it was first found in 2008 in Massac County, but has since been found in Pulaski and Williamson counties.

Japanese chaff flower is easy to identify. Plants can be up to 2 meters tall (particularly in sunny areas). The leaves are opposite, simple, and entire along the margins. The flowers occur on erect spikes at the end of the stems and upper branches. Flowers are small, lack petals, and occur in a tight cluster at the end of the spike.



US Distribution

The flowers diverge at nearly a right angle from the spike, giving the flowers somewhat of a bottle-brush look. When the fruit are formed, the spikes elongate greatly and the fruit lay flat against the spike. Each fruit has a pair of stiff bracts that aid the fruit in attaching to clothes or fur.

Japanese chaff flower seems to grow best in areas with partial sun and moist soils, but can also grow in heavily shaded and drier environments. Dense infestations have been found in bottomland forests, riverbanks, field edges, and ditches.

This plant can produce an abundance of seed that is easily transported by sticking to shoes, clothing, or animal fur via the stiff, recurved bracts.

If you plan on hiking in areas where this plant is present, please be sure to thoroughly clean all seeds off of your clothing and pet's hair. If you find any infestations of Japanese chaff flower in Illinois, please contact Chris Evans at 618-998-5920 or rivertoriver@gmail.com.



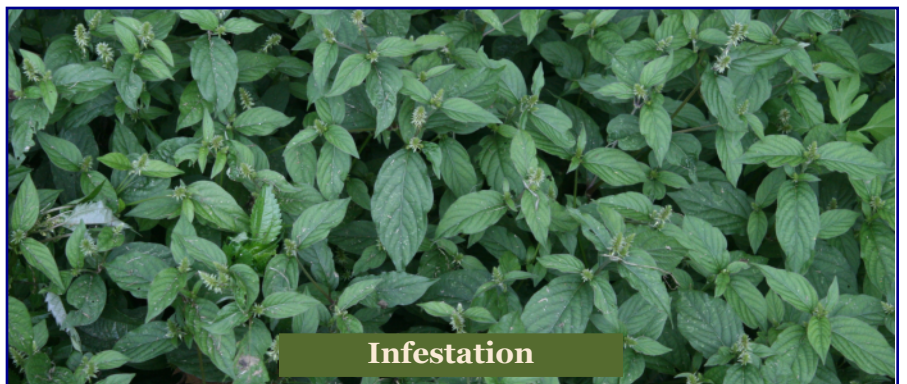
Seeds



Seed head



Leaves



Infestation

Developed by Christopher Evans, River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area, September 2010

The CWMA is a partnership between the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Illinois Department of Agriculture Illinois Department of Transportation Shawnee National Forest Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service University of Illinois - Extension Southern Illinois University at Carbondale The Nature Conservancy Shawnee Resource Conservation & Development Area