

## Johnsongrass



Collar region. The ligule of seedling stage johnsongrass is a jagged membrane. As the plant matures, a ring of hairs will develop across the upper 1/3 of the ligule.



Plant. Key characteristics: Leaf blades are mainly smooth and have a prominent white midvein. Sheaths are compressed and often are reddish in color.



Rhizomes. Johnson grass has thick, scaly underground structures which produce new shoot growth.



Inflorescence. Key characteristics: Highly branched, open panicle which is often purplish in color.



Seed. Seed are hairy, glossy, oblong with a sharp terminal and approximately 4.0 to 5.0 mm long.

Life cycle: warm season perennial.

**Toxic Plant:** leaves and stems possess cyanide. The young shoots are the most toxic, and when wilted or frost-damaged, cyanide becomes readily available in the leaves. Nitrates can accumulate in johnsongrass. Well-cured hay is relatively safe for animal consumption as mature plants have much lower toxicity. Symptoms occur very rapidly. The animal will breathe rapidly and deeply, then become anxious and stressed. Progressing symptoms include trembling, incoordination, attempts to urinate and defecate and collapsing. Finally, respiratory or cardiac arrest may occur, leading to a violent death.