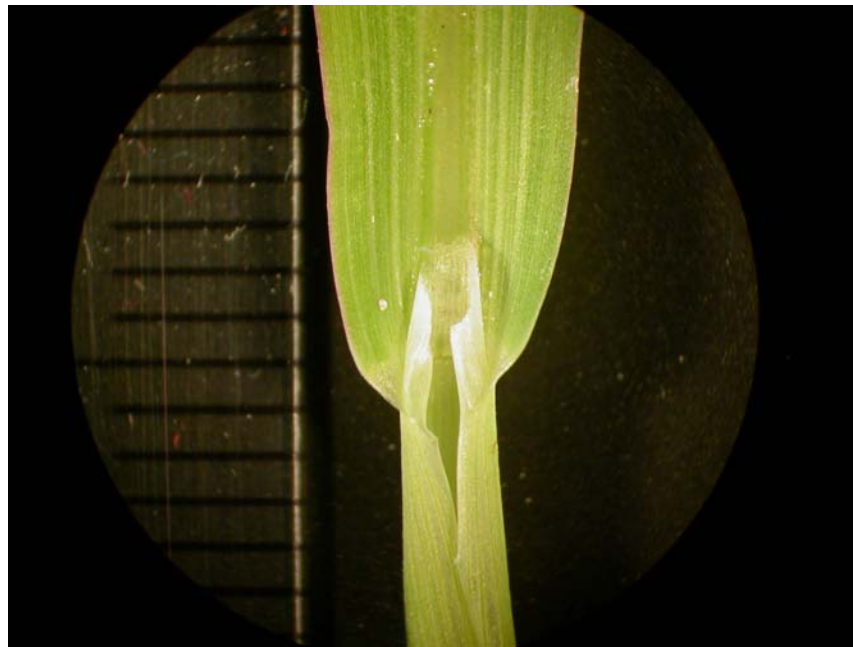


Shattercane



Seedling. Key characteristics: jagged, membranous ligule. Prominent midvein in the center of the leaf blade. Blades and sheath are smooth.



Vegetative plants. Key characteristics: Often, shattercane is difficult to distinguish from johnsongrass. The leaf blades of shattercane tend to be much wider than those of johnsongrass. If small shattercane seedlings are pulled carefully from the soil, there may be a large, rounded seed (left) attached.



Seedling plants. Key characteristics: an annual plant, shattercane does not produce rhizomes as does johnsongrass.



Inflorescence. Key characteristics: seedheads are variable in shattercane. They may be openly branched or tightly bunched. Seed is large, rounded and shiny black in color.

Life cycle: summer annual.

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 shattercane. 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.