

New Invasive Species in Gila County

yellow bluestem (*Bothriochloa ischaemum*)

**AZ Dept. of
Ag. Class B
Noxious Weed**



Max Licher
SEINet

Occurrence

Native to Europe, Northern Africa and Asia, and introduced to the Great Plains in 1920s. Found near disturbed roadsides, cultivated fields, high-quality grassland, or pinyon-juniper habitats. Originally thought to only have a range of 4,000 in elevation but is now being documented at higher elevations.

Characteristics

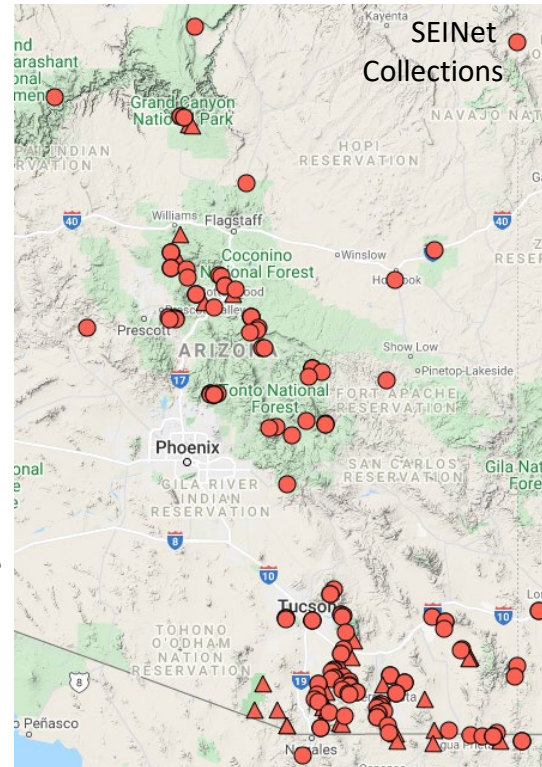
Yellow bluestem is a perennial bunch grass, growing up to 4ft tall.

The leaves mostly occur at the base of the plant and are 2 to 10 inches long. Leaves become shorter as they continue up the stem. The leaf blades have very prominent parallel veins that can be seen with the naked eye. There are swollen, brownish-red nodes along the stems.

The inflorescence (grass flower) is shaped like a fan, or windmill. As they dry out the seeds will have a purple tint to them. Seeds have many hairs.

Concerns

Yellow bluestem can change soil biochemicals, which can hinder the growth of native grasses, allowing bluestem to outcompete important native grasses. Areas where bluestem can become established are turned into monocultures.



Julie Luetzelschwab
SEINet



Julie Luetzelschwab
SEINet



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES
**Cooperative
Extension**

In areas that have converted to yellow bluestem monocultures, a decrease in the diversity of birds and insects has been documented.

Bluestem is not good forage for wildlife or cattle. Yellow bluestem has the potential to provide increased fuel for fires because it is a large bunchgrass, especially in areas where it has formed a monoculture.



Yellow bluestem monoculture in Young, AZ
Ashley Hall
UA Cooperative Extension

Yellow Bluestem vs Native Grasses

There are several native species in Gila County that look similar to yellow bluestem.



Max Licher
SEINet

cane beard grass

Similar growth structure, seed hairs are white and “fluffier”. No swollen nodes.



Max Licher
SEINet

green sprangletop

Windmill-like inflorescence but does not turn purple. Base of leaf stems are flat to touch. No hairs on seeds.



Max Licher
SEINet

little bluestem

White hairs, leaves and stems reddish color as they dry out. Seeds in a spike, not windmill.

What Can You Do?

Pulling/digging up, bagging and removing from site is the easiest removal method. Does not respond to all herbicides and often takes multiple applications. Studies show a combo of moving and herbicide most effective. Once established, bluestem can be difficult to eradicate.

Help Stop the Spread of Yellow Bluestem and Other Invasive Species

Invasive species typically spread along roadways, fields, or residential areas. If traveling to/from a new area consider cleaning your hiking boots and tires (vehicle, RV, 5th wheel, UTV/ATV) to remove any invasive seeds. Consider purchasing certified weed free hay for your animals. When possible, help educate others about the threat and spread of invasive species.



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES
**Cooperative
Extension**

For more information contact:
Ashley Lauren Hall, Area Assistant Agent
Ashleys3@email.arizona.edu