

# INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT: Yellow Bluestem

A **Containment Priority** Species in the Sonoran Desert Cooperative Weed Management Area (Pima County, AZ)

This non-native perennial grass forms monocultures, decreasing biodiversity and increasing fuel loads, especially in grasslands. Mature plants are unpalatable to cattle. It can be very difficult to eradicate once it is established. It is a State of Arizona [Class B noxious weed](#).

**Identification:** (*Bothriochloa ischaemum*) Perennial yellow-green bunchgrass, up to 4' tall with distinctive silvery, reddish-purple, fan/finger-shaped seed heads. Can form a rhizomatous sod if mowed or grazed. Typically flowers in Aug-Sep and seeds Aug-Nov. ([SEINet](#), AZ NPS)

**Distribution in Pima County:** Very versatile – found in desert, grassland, woodland, forest and riparian areas, as well as roadsides, disturbed areas and rangelands ranging in elevation from 2,000-8,000 feet. (see [EDDMaps](#) for current data)

**Commonly Mistaken Grasses:** Feather fingergrass (*Chloris virgata*), cane beard grass (*Bothriochloa barbinodis*), green sprangletop (*Leptochloa dubia*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), plains lovegrass (*Eragrostis intermedia*), tobosagrass (*Pleuraphis mutica*), galleta (*Pleuraphis jamesii*).

**How you can help:** A mapping campaign is underway to improve documentation and monitoring of yellow bluestem trends in Pima County. Please help us by reporting yellow bluestem observations at <https://www.eddmaps.org/>. Or join the [Arizona Native Plant Society-Pima County Dept of Transportation roadside volunteer invasive weed spray program](#).



# Treatment Options for Yellow Bluestem

METHOD	SEASON
<b>Cultural</b>	
<p><b>Prevention</b> measures are critical. Education of the public is necessary because it is present in residential and commercial areas. The plant is easily spread by people, their vehicles and materials. People working with or around yellow bluestem should be very careful about spreading seeds. Avoid walking in areas covered in dry plants. Decontaminate boots, pants, gloves, tools, and anything that enters yellow bluestem areas.</p>	<p>Aug-Nov when seed heads are present, making the plant easier to identify and also when seed production and, therefore, risk of spread is highest.</p>
<b>Mechanical</b>	
<p><b>Mowing/weed-eating</b> causes the plants to become a sod grass, making removal more difficult. Mowing without another type of follow-up will be of little use.</p>	None
<p><b>Hand pulling/digging</b> may aid in control, especially in smaller patches. Remove as much of the root stock as possible. Success is unlikely when it is spreading by rhizomes.</p>	Any
<b>Chemical</b>	
<p><i>Misuse of any herbicide can be harmful to the user and the environment. Always read and follow the instructions on the product label before purchasing and applying a herbicide to treat invasive plants. The label is the law.</i></p>	
<p><b>Foliar.</b> Terrestrial or aquatic formulation of glyphosate, rate: 3% active ingredient. The addition of 1% Ammonium Sulfate (AMS) can enhance glyphosate uptake in plants.</p>	<p>Summer, when plants are actively growing. Apply when seed heads show signs of emerging from their sheaths or just before. Repeat applications may be needed to control continuously emerging plants.</p>

**Table:** This information above was compiled by invasive plant experts participating in the [Sonoran Desert Cooperative Weed Management Area](#) based on the best available information as of January 2023.



# Reported Distribution and Modeled Habitat Suitability of **Yellow Bluestem** (*Bothriochloa ischaemum*) in Pima County, Arizona

