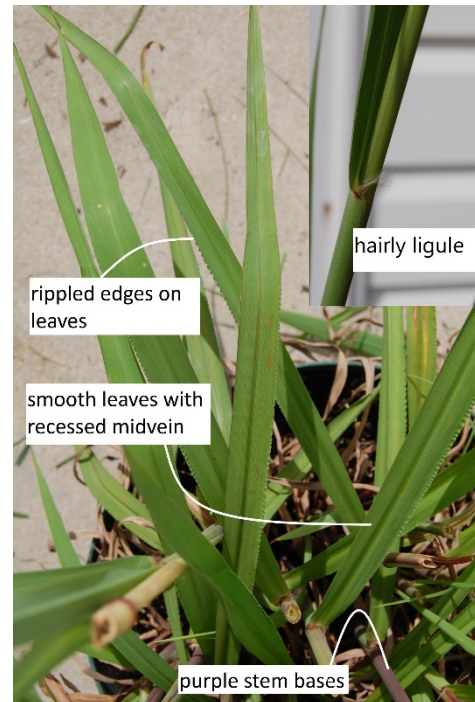


Weed focus: Vasey grass

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A relatively new invasive plant, Vasey grass (*Paspalum urvillei*), has come on to the scene in a grand scale. Vasey grass is a warm-season, perennial bunch grass, related to dallisgrass (*P. dilatatum* Poir.). It is native to South America, but has been reported on all continents. It has small rhizomes and grows in large tufts that can reach 6 feet in height. Vasey grass is a prolific seeder, its main form of propagation. Vasey grass has no reported toxicity; however, it is nearly ignored by grazing livestock despite its appearance as a lush forage source. It is extremely tough, making it difficult for animals to bite off and chew and is reported to have poor nutritive value.

Vasey grass plants have several distinctive characteristics (see photo at right). Its stems are smooth, except at the base where they can be hairy and purplish. Leaf blades are smooth with an indented midvein and sometimes rippling along the edges. Ligules are hairy and conspicuous. Young plants might be confused with dallisgrass; however, Vasey grass is more upright in its growth habit than dallisgrass, which tends to be sprawling (photos below). The two species can also be distinguished by their seed heads (photo on following page). Vasey grass has verticle stems, topped with a branched flower that may have 5 – 30 branches. Dallisgrass stems also tend to sprawl and have fewer branches.



Vasey grass (left) as compared to dallisgrass (below)





Control of Vasey grass in pastures: Vasey grass propagates and spreads quickly, especially since livestock don't like it. This makes early control essential. Sadly, there are few options. Because it is often taller than the other plants in a pasture canopy, wicking with glyphosate might be an option, as is spot spraying. Wicking is most effective in killing the entire plant when done in 2 passes, forward and back. Care must be taken, however, to avoid applying glyphosate to

desirable plants. Impose[®] can control Vasey grass in bermudagrass pastures or hay fields, but shouldn't be used on other species of grass.

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