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Introduced Weedy Grasses in Iowa¹

By RICHARD W. POHL

Abstract. *Chloris verticillata* Nutt., *Eriochloa villosa* (Thunb.) Kunth, and *Miscanthus sacchariflorus* (Maxim.) Hack., are reported as three grasses new to the Iowa flora.

The following grasses new to the Iowa flora have been recorded in recent years.

Chloris verticillata Nutt.

This species is native to the southwestern states and is adventive in Iowa. In each locality, the plant has been found in lawns. Since *Chloris verticillata* seed has occasionally been found in lawn seed mixtures by Iowa State College seed analysts, it seems likely the species entered the state in lawn seed. Well established colonies of this species occur on the embankments of the underpass beneath the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad at Ames (this colony has been observed for twelve years) and on the lawn northeast of the State House in Des Moines.

The herbarium has the following records:

Story County: Several patches in lawn, underpass beneath C. & N.W. R.R. in Ames. August 14, 1947. R. W. Pohl 7196 (ISC).
Wapello County: In bluegrass turf of yard, Ottumwa. June 28, 1938. R. M. Hurd (ISC).

Eriochloa villosa (Thunb.) Kunth (Figure 1)

The genus *Eriochloa* is known in Iowa only by a single collection of this Asiatic species. *E. villosa* was previously recorded from the United States by Hitchcock (1951) from Oregon and Colorado.

Ringgold County: SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of NE $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 4, Jefferson Twp. Land of Harold Cunningham. Len R. Beath (ISC 225551). August 8, 1957.

Miscanthus sacchariflorus (Maxim.) Hack. (Figure 2)

This Asiatic species has been sparingly cultivated for ornament and shows strong tendencies to escape. Hitchcock (1951) was the first to report this species from the wild. The Hitchcock report indi-

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cated that the species occurred in Clinton County. It is possible to see the plants in flower in low-lying areas along Highway 30 in this county.

Miscanthus sacchariflorus was cultivated for ornament as early as 1942 in the Herbaceous Garden on the Iowa State College Campus. Here it spread aggressively until it was destroyed. The plants reach 2 m. or more in height and spread by numerous vigorous rhizomes. In growth habits, *M. sacchariflorus* resembles Johnson grass. A colony along Highway 30 just southwest of Lowden has spread to

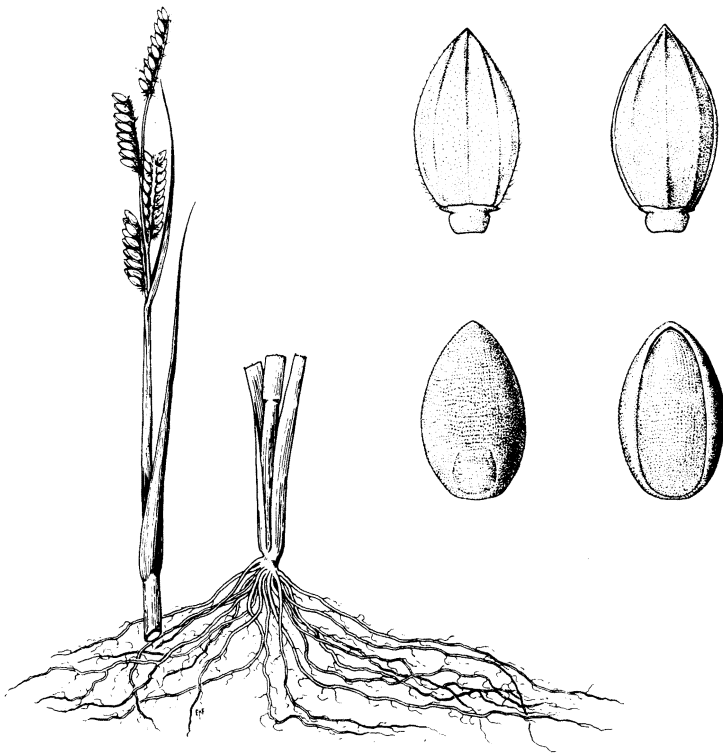


Figure 1. *Eriochloa villosa*. Inflorescence and spikelets.

occupy at least 100 sq. m. Another colony south of Ottumwa shows several small patches remote from the original planting site. Presumably these arose from seed.

During the past year a number of requests for identification of this species have been received from the public. These requests indicate that the plant is growing in or near Gladbrook, Vinton, Brandon, and Washington. Inflorescences being used in winter bouquets

have been observed also in a number of instances. Apparently the plant is spreading rapidly in Iowa and may become a serious pest. Herbarium records from Iowa State College and the State University of Iowa indicate *Miscanthus sacchariflorus* in Winneshiek, Webster, Story, Jones, Dallas, Johnson, Cedar, Montgomery, Wapello, and Lee counties. In addition, sight records or inquiries from the public show its probable presence in Buchanan, Tama, Benton, and Washington counties.

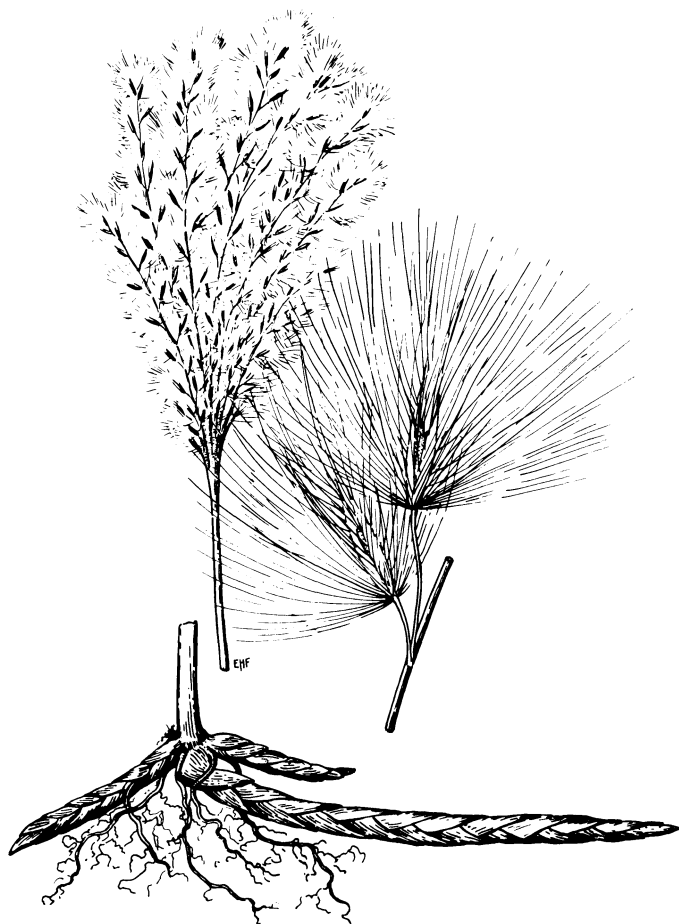


Figure 2. *Miscanthus sacchariflorus*. Panicle, spikelet pair, rhizomatous base of plant.

Literature Cited

Hitchcock, A. S. 1951. Manual of the Grasses of the United States. U.S.D.A. Misc. Pub. 200. Revised Edition, by Agnes Chase.

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