

Sorghum halepense

COMMON NAME

Johnson grass

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Sorghum halepense (L.) Pers.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

SORHAL

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Root system freely branching, fibrous. **Rhizomes** stout, creeping with purple spots, usually with scales at the nodes. **Stems** erect, stout, from 0.45–1.8 m or more tall. **Leaves** alternate, simple, smooth 15–50 cm long, about 1.3–3.8 cm wide. **Panicles** large, purplish, hairy (Wax, Fawcett and Isely 1981).

LIFE CYCLE

Reproduces by seeds or rhizome fragments during cultivation (Department of Conservation 1998). Seed nearly 3 mm long, oval, reddish-brown, marked with fine lines on surface, bearing a conspicuous awn easily broken off (Wax, Fawcett and Isely 1981). Dispersed bywind, water, on the coats of animals, being ingested by birds and cattle, or in contaminated seeds and feed stocks (Department of Conservation 1998).

YEAR NATURALISED

1946

ORIGIN

Mediterranean

TOLERANCES

The foliage is killed by frost but rhizomes can tolerate 2 days with soil temperatures of -3 to -5C (Department of Conservation 1998)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Wax LM, Fawcett RS, Isley D, eds. 1981. Weeds of the North Central States. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of Agriculture, Illinois, USA. 303 p.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/sorghum-halepense/>

