



# FRIGHTENING FACTS

South Carolina and North Carolina Exotic Plant Pest Councils



**SCIENTIFIC NAME: *COMMELINA BENGHALENSIS***

**COMMON NAME: TROPICAL SPIDERWORT**

**\*KNOWN TO OCCUR IN NC\***



## WHAT IS TROPICAL SPIDERWORT?

**Plant Type:** Creeping or upright herb, annual and perennial, fleshy and succulent.

**Form/Size:** Freely branching, up to 15 in. long, forms dense mats and pure stands, rapid growth.

**Leaves:** Alternate, sheathed, lily-like, broadly elliptical, 1.2-2.8 in. long with reddish hairs towards the tip and on leaf sheath.

**Flowers:** Underground flowers on

burrowing rhizomes are small and white. Above ground flowers have 2 large and 1 small purple petals. Short flower stalk.

**Fruit:** Capsule with 2 seeds, each plant can produce about 1600 seeds.

**Means of Spread:** Vegetative growth by rooting at the nodes of stems, broken stems resulting from cultivation will also root; both aerial and underground seeds are viable. Plant material can move around on hand tools, animals, clothing, and machinery. Can also be imported with seeds, spices, and condiments.



**Family:** Commelinaceae

**Similar Species:** Asiatic Dayflower, (*Commelina communis*) has two large blue petals, no hairs on leaves, and no underground flowers (non-native but currently less threat).



## WHERE DID TROPICAL SPIDERWORT COME FROM?

**Origin:** Asia and Africa.

**Date of Introduction:** 1963.

**Reason:** Accidental or unknown.

## WHERE AM I LIKELY TO FIND TROPICAL SPIDERWORT?

**Habitat Type:** Areas with moist soil, roadsides, grasslands, disturbed soil, widely adaptable to many soil types and moisture regimes.

**Distribution in SC:** Not detected

**Distribution in NC:** Found in Wake, Wayne, Sampson, Washington Counties



Early Detection & Rapid Response (EDRR) Species



# FRIGHTENING FACTS

South Carolina and North Carolina Exotic Plant Pest Councils



## WHY IS TROPICAL SPIDERWORT A PROBLEM?

**Environment:** -Not generally found in natural areas.

**Economy:** -Forms dense pure stands in cropland and pastures and can smother low growing crops and grasses, competes with crops for resources reducing yields.

-Control methods can be expensive and difficult



## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND TROPICAL SPIDERWORT?

**Report:** Take a photo, GPS location if possible, report the observation to EDDMaps: <http://www.se-eppc.org/> (location, size of infestation, etc.). **In SC:** Call the Clemson Department of Plant Industry at 864-646-2130 to report. Send digital photo to John Nelson at the USC Herbarium: [plantman@herbarium.org](mailto:plantman@herbarium.org) for verification.

**Control:** Manual control is usually ineffective, herbicides found to be effective include 2 4 D, Bentazon, S-metolachlor, clomazone, sulfentrazone, and glyphosate (on young plants). Re-plant fast growing crops as soon as possible after treatment to smother any regrowth.

**Disposal:** If hand pulled, lay plant material out to dry for more than a week.



## CURRENT LISTINGS:

Federal Noxious Weed

State Noxious Weed in 46

states including SC and NC

SC-EPPC: Watch B/Herb

NC-EPPC/NCNPS: Watch

List B

NCDOT: Watch

List/Herbaceous Plant

GA-EPPC: Category 4



## LEARN MORE!

- Invasive.org (images): <http://www.invasive.org/species/subject.cfm?sub=4551>
- University of Florida IFAS Extension:  
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/files/AG/AG23000.pdf>
- North American Plant Protection Organization: <http://www.nappo.org/PRA-sheets/Commelinabenghalensis.pdf>
- Federal Noxious Weed Disseminules of the U.S. (seed image):  
<http://keys.lucidcentral.org/keys/FNW/FNW%20seeds/html/fact%20sheets/Commelina%20benghalensis.htm>

Prepared by Sudie Daves Thomas for SC-EPPC and Early Detection & Rapid Response System

Early Detection & Rapid Response (EDRR) Species