

# Japanese Millet Seed

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*Echinochloa frumentacea*, more commonly referred to as Japanese millet or "billion-dollar grass", is an introduced annual. It has coarse leaves and varies from one to five feet in height depending on available moisture and fertility. The seed-head is a compact panicle-type inflorescence four to eight inches long, purplish in color, with awnless seeds. Billion-dollar grass produces a much heavier seed yield than the wild species. There are approximately 155,000 seeds per pound.

## Adaptations

Japanese millet is well suited for areas with wet conditions. With a tolerance for wet and muddy soil conditions while growing, Japanese millet is able to be flooded while growing as long as its leaves remain above water. After maturity is reached, a Japanese millet plot is able to be flooded and used as a duck pond due to its tolerance for wetness. This tolerance for wetter conditions also makes Japanese millet a strong nurse crop to protect slower growing, more tender legumes.

## Establishment

Seed may be drilled or broadcast and incorporated to a one inch depth on upland sites. In wetland areas, draw down water levels and broadcast seed on top of wet ground. Seeding rate for pure stands is 20 lbs./acre when drilled and 25-30 lbs./acre if broadcast. In a mixture reduce rate to 8-12 lbs./acre. Planting is recommended after the last killing frost in the spring. The seeding date may be timed to synchronize the maturity date of seed with the fall migration of specific migratory birds.

## Management

As an upland food source, Japanese millet should be planted in pure stands as a field crop. For waterfowl, wetland areas planted in the spring should not be reflooded until the plants are at least six inches tall. During the migratory season, it is best to wait to flood until the crop is 12-18 inches. Japanese millet should be replanted annually to ensure a healthy growth.

## Uses

Japanese millet is an exceptional wildlife plant. It is a choice duck food and is eaten by 17 species of Northeastern waterfowl. This food is also used by five upland game birds and many non-game birds such as sparrows, finches, and cardinals. Leaves and seedheads are eaten by rabbits and muskrats. As an erosion control plant it is used as a quick growing companion crop with perennial grasses and legumes and is especially suited to wet sites.

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