

photo by Vanessa Beauchamp

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WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT WAVYLEAF
BASKETGRASS
webinar presented by Vanessa Beauchamp

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Abstract: Wavyleaf basketgrass (*Oplismenus undulatifolius*) was first discovered in Baltimore County, Maryland in 1996. Other patches were subsequently identified in Virginia in Shenandoah National Park and in several areas in and around Washington DC. This species is now estimated to cover thousands of acres of forest in Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania. Wavyleaf basketgrass spreads locally via stolons and potentially over long distances via unusually viscid seeds that readily adhere to fur, clothes and skin. A weed risk analysis by the USDA classified this species as “High Risk” in terms of establishment, spread and impact potential. This shade-tolerant perennial grass species flourishes in the understory where low light levels and deep leaf litter would otherwise prevent the establishment of many ruderal invasive plant species. Dr. Beauchamp’s lab at Towson University has been researching the ecology of this emerging invasive species since 2009. Her lab has characterized the most probable habitats for this species, its seed production and dispersal, competitive ability, and responses to herbicide control. More recently, her lab has been collaborating on a project examining wavyleaf basketgrass population genetics and has just begun research on the effects of this species on the soil microbiome. This webinar will present an overview of the results of these studies to help managers understand and educate others identification of this species, what to expect when it shows up, and what to do about it.



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Dr. Vanessa Beauchamp is an Associate Professor of Biological Sciences at Towson University where she teaches classes in ecology and evolution, botany, and wetland ecology. With a BS in Biology from University of California, Irvine and a Ph.D. in Plant Biology from Arizona State University she has 20 years of experience working with invasive plant species from the desert southwest to the mid-Atlantic Piedmont. Her other research interests include urban forest succession, effects of deer browse on ecosystem processes, and ecology of streamside (riparian) plant communities. A large part of her research program involves practical applications related to management, conservation and restoration of plant communities.

Website: <https://www.towson.edu/fcsm/departments/biology/facultystaff/vbeauchamp.html>