

Managing Smartweeds in Food Plots

A Lesson in Timeliness

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Several species of 'smartweeds' and all are closely related

- Pennsylvania smartweed
- Ladysthumb
- Swamp smartweed

Management strategies in food plots are similar among the smartweeds.

Slay will control all three species of smartweed, but weed size is important.

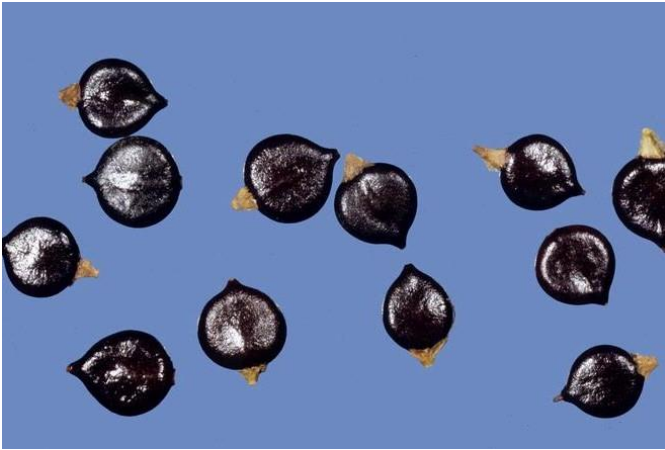
Smartweed leaf shape



Smartweed leaves are all lance shaped. Some species have a reddish watermark on leaves, and some do not.



Unique characteristics of smartweeds



Smartweeds produce glossy black seed. Smartweeds have swollen nodes or joints on the stem. The nodes are covered by a clear membrane called **ocrea**. The weed on the left is ladythumb which has an ocrea with a fringe of hair. The weed on the right is Pennsylvania smartweed which has an ocrea that does not have a fringe of hair. A hand lens is often needed to observe this characteristic.

Smartweeds flowering characteristics



By the time smartweeds are flowering, they are too mature for control with Slay.

Seedling smartweeds – the **ideal** stage of growth for control



This is the stage of smartweed growth for maximum control with Slay.



Smartweed at 3-inch stage of growth



This is the **maximum** stage of smartweed growth for control with Slay.



Control with Slay diminishes as weeds grow.

Key points for managing smartweeds:

- Have herbicide supplies on-hand and sprayers calibrated as summer approaches.
- Begin close inspection of food plots for smartweeds from May through June – depending on latitude.
- **Slay (4 fl. oz./A) plus Surefire herbicide adjuvant will control smartweeds up to 3 inches tall.**
- Slay has significant soil-residual weed control properties. Slay will control smartweed seedlings that have not emerged from the soil.