

Shattercane

Sorghum bicolor L. (Moench.)

Family: Poaceae

Life cycle: Annual

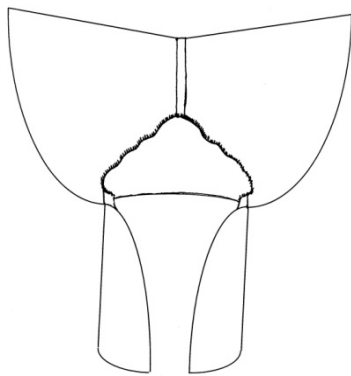
Habitat: Crop fields

General description: Erect, 'corn-like' plant, up to 8 ft tall. Seedhead is a large, open panicle; large seeds maroon to black at maturity. Base of leaf blade is usually hairy.

Key ID traits: Membranous ligule; leaf sheaths often covered with waxy bloom.

Similar species: Johnsongrass has similar growth habit, but is perennial and produces rhizomes. Johnsongrass rhizomes are intolerant of Iowa's winters, thus it is not a significant problem in the state. *Sorghum almum* is a hybrid of shattercane and Johnsongrass that produces short rhizomes.

Miscellaneous: Shattercane is an off-type of sorghums grown for grain and forage. Name is due to seed dropping from plant prior to harvest. Most infestations get started in fields planted to a cultivated variety of sorghum. Infestations in Iowa have decreased since the 1970's due to introduction of effective herbicides and the decrease in planting of grain and forage sorghum in the state.



Shattercane on edge of corn field
AG1010117 217