Weeds of Rice

Barnyardgrass – *Echinochloa crus-galli*

A warm-season vigorous grass reaching up to 5 feet, barnyardgrass has panicles that may vary from reddish to dark purple. The seed heads contain crowded large seeds in spikelets, each with a short, stiff awn. Leaf blades are flat, 3/8 to 5/8 inch wide, smooth, and without a ligule, a papery-like membrane at the collar of the plant where the leaf blade contacts the stem. The stem is flat not round.

**Broadleaf signalgrass – Brachiaria platyphylla**

A spreading summer annual, broadleaf signalgrass has short, wide leaf blades, ranging from 1.5 to 6 inches long and 1/4 to 2/3 inch wide. Leaf blades are typically hairless, except for hairs that occur in the margins and the lower portion of young plants. It doesn’t have a ligule, a papery-like membrane at the junction of the sheath and leaf blade.

**Sedge – Cyperus spp.**

There are many species of sedges that are weeds in rice fields. Some are annuals and some are perennials. The perennial species produce underground rhizomes or bulbs. They are not grasses or broadleaf weeds. But, they are distinctive because their stems are triangular in cross-section.

**Fringerush – Fimbristylis spp.**

Fringerush, also called fan sedge, is an annual often found in the coastal plains. Leaves are flattened, very narrow and up to 12-18 inches long. The seed head is onion-like in appearance with fruiting bodies rounded and scaley.
Sprangletop – *Leptochloa* spp.

Sprangletop (*Leptochloa uninervia*), bearded sprangletop (*Leptochloa fasciculata*) and red sprangletop (*Leptochloa filifomis*). All three are tall with thin, flat leaf blades, running 1/4 to 1/3 inch wide and up to 12 inches long. Sprangletop has a ligule, a papery-like membrane at the collar of the plant where the leaf blade contacts the stem. All three have a large, open panicle when mature.

Dayflower – *Commelina communis*

A crawling, spreading summer annual, dayflower grow up to 2 feet. The plant may grow either upright or creeping with numerous branches sprouting at the nodes and stems. Leaves have conspicuous sheaths at the base, and flowers feature two upright blue petals and one smaller white petal. The egg-shaped leaves are 0.3-0.6 inches long and 0.3-1.5 inches wide.

Ducksalad – *Heteranthera limosa*

An aquatic annual or perennial, ducksalad grows in open water either near water inlets or in openings in sparse stands. The mature plant grows up to 6 inches tall. Leaf blades may either narrow to a point or be duckbilled at the tip.

Gooseweed – *Sphenoclea zeylandica*

Sometimes known as chicken spike, gooseweed may grow up to 4' feet tall. Leaves grow opposite each other and are shaped and smooth. Stems are hollow and branch above the base. The elliptical leaves vary in size, ranging to about 2" wide and 5" long. The flowers are borne on a distinctive cylindrical terminal spike.

Eclipta – *Eclipta prostrata*

A spindly growing annual weed, Eclipta has simple opposite leaves. Leaves measure 3-5 inches long and are elliptical, lacking stalks. Lower surfaces of leaves are hairy. Stems feel sand papery.
Ammannia – *Ammannia* spp.

Several different species fall under the genera *Ammannia* and are commonly called purple ammannia, redstem and toothcup. These annual weeds grow upright up to 3-4 feet tall. The stems are square and slightly winged with opposite, ear-like, clasping leaves up to 4 inches long. The flowers are reddish to purple and small, running 0.05 to 0.1 inches long.

Northern jointvetch – *Aeschynomene* spp.

Two different species may infest rice fields: Indian jointvetch (*Aeschynomene indica*) and northern jointvetch (*Aeschynomene virginica*). Both are upright and usually bushy, growing up to 3-4 feet tall. Indian jointvetch differs from northern jointvetch in that its fruit stalk and leaflets are shorter and its flower smaller. Northern jointvetch plants have large stipules or bracts at the base of the leaf stalk or petiole. Both have pea-like flowers and can be distinguished from hemp sesbania because of a smaller size and more delicate appearance. The alternating leaves have as many as 56 oblong leaflets with smooth edges. Leaflets fold when touched.

Hemp sesbania – *Sesbania exaltata*

Commonly called coffeebean or coffeeweed, hemp sesbania is a tall, blue-green, spindly weed growing up to 12-14 feet. The plants have a yellow, pea-like flower. Seed pods are 4-8 inches long, curved and often tipped with a 0.4-inch-long beak. The leaves are opposite and may feature as many as 70 leaflets with a smooth surface and somewhat hairy surface below.

Annual arrowhead – *Sagittaria montevidensis*

More of a problem in water-seeded rice, annual arrowhead is also known as giant arrowhead. The plants, growing up to 20 inches tall, feature arrowhead-shaped leaves and flower petals with green spots. The plants only stems are erect, leafless and have only flowers. The leaves arise from the stem base with a stout, spongy stalk and may be up to 8 inches long.
**Alligatorweed** – *Alternanthera philoxeroides*

Alligatorweed is an aquatic perennial that forms dense floating mats. It has hollow stems, opposite leaves with distinctive midribs and a single white flower head. The leaves are elliptically shaped and 0.2 to 0.8 inches wide.

**Texasweed** – *Caperonia palustris*

Although also referred to as Mexicanweed (*Caperonia castanifolia*), Texasweed is a different species. The annual upright plant grows to about 2-3 feet tall with coarse male and female flowers with unique three-capsuled fruit. Leaves are alternating and broad, with serrated edges.

**Paspalum/Vasey grass** – *Paspalum* spp.

Perennial grass that forms a clump; thus, sometimes called a clump grass. Seeds arranged in 4 rows along seedhead.

**Water primrose** – *Ludwigia* spp.

Perennial broadleaf weed that can be erect near shoreline, but can produce runners on wet soil or on water surface. Roots are produced at nodes along runners. Single flowers are yellow with 4-5 petals. Waterfowl consume seeds. Plant provides food and shelter for many aquatic invertebrates.
**Morning glory** – *Convolvulus* spp.

Perennial broadleaf weed with ability to produce vines. Produces underground rhizomes which cannot be detected above ground. At each node, a new plant can be generated. Can also reproduce from seeds which can lay dormant in soil for many years.

---

**Red rice** – *Oryza sativa*

Genetically the same species as rice, but is a serious weed pest of rice. Sometimes called wild rice. Used to be more problematic before the advent of CLEARFIELD technology, more effective herbicides and drill seeding. The bran layer of the seed is reddish; thus, the name. Weedy rice is red rice that is resistant to imazethapyr as a result of interbreeding with Clearfield rice.

---

**Johnson grass** – *Sorghum halepense*

Perennial grass native to the Mediterranean. The plant has been introduced all over the world; one of the 10 worst weeds in the world. Can be toxic to livestock when the plant is under stress---like drought. Stress can trigger the plant to produce excessive amounts of hydrogen cyanide; can also cause bloat due to accumulation of excessive amounts of nitrates.