

Introduction

Striga is a highly successful pathogen of cereal crops in sub-Saharan Africa. Also known as witchweed, *Striga* is an attractive parasitic plant whose beautiful flowers belie its noxiousness. Most cultivated cereals, including maize, millet, sorghum, and rice, are parasitized by at least one *Striga* species, leading to enormous economic losses. Control strategies are limited but include common agronomic practices of hand weeding, crop rotation, and general sanitization techniques. *Striga*-resistant crops, as well as tolerant ones, have also been used, but this resistance tends to break down with the emergence of new *Striga* variants. With limited and ineffective management options, *Striga* has continued to increase both its host range and area under infestation. In this article, we outline seven unique characteristics of *Striga* as a parasite of great economic importance, explore reasons for its success, and outline emerging control options.