United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS

Natural Resources Conservation Service
355 East Hancock Avenue, Mail Stop 200
Athens, Georgia 30601
Phone: 706 546-2272

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Filing Instructions. File Plant Material Technical Note No. 20, in front of Plant Material Technical Note No. 19. Add the Technical Note 20 to Plant Material Technical Note Index.

LEONARD JORDAN
State Conservationist

DIST: TN

TECHNICAL NOTE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
ATHENS, GEORGIA

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AMERICUS INDIANGRASS – A NATIVE GRASS FOR THE SOUTHEAST

Submitted by
Donald Surrency and Mike Owsley

United States Department of Agriculture

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Athens, Georgia 30601
Phone: 706 546-2272

AMERICUS INDIANGRASS –
A NATIVE GRASS FOR THE SOUTHEAST

INTRODUCTION:

Indiangrass is a native perennial warm season grass. It is a tall robust grass, which produces an attractive golden panicle in the fall. Indiangrass has been widely used in the Midwest as a forage grass. "Lometa" is a Midwestern cultivar that grows and performs well in the Southeast. A new cultivar called "Americus" was recently released by USDA-NRCS Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center. Americus was created from southeastern germplasm which originated in Alabama and Georgia. Americus indiangrass was released primarily as a livestock forage however, this attractive native grass could have even more potential as an urban landscape and restoration plant.

AREAS OF ADAPTATION:

Americus is tolerant of most upland sites. It is most productive on moderately well to well drained soils. It is well adapted in Alabama and Georgia. It should be adapted to most of the Southeastern United States as Far West as Arkansas and East Texas. However, additional field comparisons are needed to determine the exact range of this cultivar.

ESTABLISHMENT:

SOILS**:** Americus is most productive and adapted to moderately well to well drained sites.

PLANTING DATE**:** Time of optimum planting can vary due to soils, latitude and elevation. We recommend April 1 – April 30 in North Georgia and March 15 – April 15 in South Georgia as the normal optimal planting dates.

FERTILIZATION: Under low pH conditions, apply enough lime to raise pH to around 6.0. After establishment and under a rotational grazing system in Southwest Georgia 600#/Ac 10-10-10 before grazing and 75#N/Ac after each grazing event for a maximum application of 210#N/Ac is applied.

SEEDING RATE**:** Broadcast 10 pounds pure live seed/acre, or 7-8 pounds pure live seed/acre drilled.

PLANTING DEPTH**:** Plant approximately ¼ inch deep.

PLANTING EQUIPMENT**:** Planting can be accomplished with fertilizer spreaders followed by cultipackers. Also Truax type native grass drills can be utilized.

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MANAGEMENT:

At establishment apply fertilizer according to soil test recommendations. However, do not apply N fertilizer during indiangrass establishment. N application at this time will encourage weed competition. Delay N fertilization until indiangrass is well established.

Grazing of indiangrass is normally conducted 2-3 years after establishment.

The Jimmy Carter PMC recommends a rotational grazing system for proper utilization of this grass. The rotational system should contain enough paddocks for a 25-30 day rotation cycle. The grass in each paddock should be approximately 24 inches high before grazing. Each grazing event should leave an average of 8-10 inches of minimal stubble for proper stand maintenance. Also refer to the fertilization section for fertilization recommendation in rotational systems.

Indiangrass is often used in a pasture mixture with big bluestem, little bluestem and switchgrass in the mid-west. This could be a good combination for the southeast also. Grazing specialists normally recommend indiangrass for a cow-calf maintenance system.

COMMERCIAL SEED PRODUCTION:

Seed can be harvested with standard combines. Harvest dates in Southwest Georgia are normally October 17 – November 4.

The seed yield varies greatly depending on weather conditions from 27#/Ac to 166#/Ac.

At the Jimmy Carter PMC in Southwest Georgia the following combine settings are used for seed harvest:

Concave	Cylinder Speed	RPM	Fan Setting	Screen Size
1/4 “	1100-1200	Full Throttle ≈2400 rpm	2	Top 1/4 - 1/8 “ open Bottom 1/8 “ open

DISEASE AND INSECTS:

This cultivar does not have any particular resistance to disease or insects beyond those commonly found in the species. During unusually wet and humid summers indiangrass including Americus can be adversely effected by rust and other diseases.

AVAILABILITY:

The Alabama Crop Improvement is working with Sharp Brothers Seed Company of Missouri to grow the new cultivar. For more information about Americus, contact Donald Surrency, Plant Materials Specialist, Thomson, Georgia, 706-595-1339. E-mail Don.Surrency@ga.usda.gov. or Mike Owsley, Plant Materials Manger, Jimmy Carter PMC, Americus, Georgia, 229-924-4499. E-mail Mike.Owsley@ga.usda.gov