
GREAT LAKES PLANT SOLUTIONS

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Happy New Year

May the coming New Year bring happy plantings to each of you!

John Rissler (Manager)

Dave Burgdorf (Plant Materials Specialist)

Sergio Perez (Biological Technician)

Elaine Gerona (Administrative Assistant)

W.A.E.s: Gail Bischoff, Claude Vail, Susan Banyai, Amanda Lee and Tucker Shirey.



Jill Pressler
LaPorte County Soil and Water Conservation District

Big Bluestem Making a Comeback

Jill Pressler, a LaPorte County Soil and Water Conservation District Employee, was one of the many conservation partners that assisted with the establishment of ten big bluestem plots in LaPorte County, IN. These plots were established with native seed accessions collected from within the Great Lakes region. Partners from LaPorte, Marshall, and Starke SWCDs, NRCS, DNR, Purdue Extension and FSA helped plant and continue to monitor and harvest the plots for evaluation by the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center in East Lansing, MI.

The Plant Materials Center is evaluating the native grass in the plots for selection of a superior native cultivar or cultivars of big bluestem. The use for the superior cultivar will be for forage production, surface mine reclamation, critical area planting, recreational area development and native restorations in the Great Lakes region. For further information contact the USDA-NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center at 517-641-6300.

2002 Plant Materials Available

Seed and/or plants of the following species are available to commercial growers:

- Southlow Michigan Germplasm Big bluestem, *Andropogon gerardi*
- Southlow Michigan Germplasm Little bluestem, *Andropogon scoparius*
- Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass, *Sorghastrum nutans*
- Southlow Michigan Germplasm Switchgrass, *Panicum virgatum*
- Indigo silky dogwood, *Cornus amomum*
- Lancer perennial pea, *Lathyrus latifolius*
- Magenta hybrid crabapple, *Malus*
- Roselow Sargent crabapple, *Malus sargentii*
- Imperial Carolina poplar, *Populus canadensis*
- Affinity northern white cedar, *Thuja occidentalis*
- Leelanau Germplasm highbush cranberry, *Viburnum opulus var. americanum*

These plants were selected to meet conservation needs and are recommended by USDA for planting throughout the Great Lakes states. Growers should contact Plant Materials Specialist, Dave Burgdorf for additional information. Dave can be contacted at 517-641-7831.

New Brochures

We have just updated and reprinted new brochures for two of our releases: Leelanau *Germplasm highbush cranberry* and 'Affinity' *Northern white cedar*. We now have brochures for all available species above. For copies of these brochures contact the Plant Materials Center.



Eastern Gamagrass Vegetative Barrier

Eastern Gamagrass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*) was planted on two cropland sites at the Purdue Feldun Farm near Bedford, Indiana on May 5, 2002. The purpose of this planting is to test Eastern Gamagrass as a conservation plant to control soil erosion in concentrated flow areas as a vegetative barrier. A vegetative barrier is a permanent stiff, dense vegetative strip planted across concentrated flow areas. There is a National Vegetative Barrier Standard (601) but it can not be used in the Great Lakes States until species have been tested.

Eastern Gamagrass, is a native, warm season, perennial, sod forming grass that is a distant relative of corn. This plant is native to extreme Southern Indiana and the Eastern United States. It can reach a height of up to 8 feet tall. Eastern Gamagrass does best in moderately well drained to somewhat poorly drained soils and exhibits some flood tolerance.

The Rose Lake Plant Materials Center (PMC) grew the plant materials for this project in a greenhouse as a sod strip. The sod strips provided by the PMC were 3 inches wide by 6 feet long. Site preparation for the planting consisted of running a portable utility trencher 4 inches deep to provide a trench for planting. Planting sod strips is preferred over planting seed to establish a vegetative barrier because plant establishment and survival is enhanced.

Jerry Roach, NRCS District Conservationist at the Bedford Field Office coordinated this project with cooperation from Purdue University and the Lawrence Soil and Water Conservation District.

This planting was completed as a component of the Indiana Plant Materials Long-Range Plan. Further information on the Indiana Plant Materials Program can be obtained at

http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/PlanningandTechnology/PlantMaterials/plant_materials.htm

If you need additional information contact Ken Collins, Forester/Botanist at (317) 290-3200 extension 356.

Web sites:

<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

<http://plants.usda.gov>



“Greenhouse grown E. gamagrass sod going to field”



“Vegetative Barrier becoming established”

Contacting Us:

Rose Lake Plant Materials Center
7472 Stoll Road
East Lansing, MI 48823
Phone: 517-641-6300
Email: John.Rissler@mi.usda.gov

Dave Burgdorf, Plant Materials Specialist
3001 Coolidge Rd. Suite250
East Lansing, MI 48823
Phone: 517-641-7831
Email: Dave.Burgdorf@mi.usda.gov

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