

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

Notice of Source Identified Plant Release

Indiangrass

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the University of Northern Iowa (UNI), the Iowa Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management Program (IRVM), the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT), and the Iowa Crop Improvement Association (ICIA) announce the release of a Source Identified Northern Iowa Germplasm of indiangrass, *Sorghastrum nutans* (L.) Nash.

The indiangrass has been assigned the NRCS accession number 9062316.

Origin: Northern Iowa

Ecotype Description:

Indiangrass is a tall (four to eight feet) warm season perennial grass which spreads by short rhizomes. Golden-yellow lance-shaped, rather dense panicles are 4-12 inches long on erect stems 4-8 feet tall. Leaves are rather stiff and straight. Prominent vertical projections are located on both sides of the sheath throat. Leaves are lighter green than those of big bluestem, a common associate. It is found in the eastern Canadian provinces and in all but six western states. It is most commonly associated with bluestem grasses; particularly in the central lowland and eastern portions of the Great Plains. This grass, which is relished by livestock, produces excellent hay if cut before flower stalks develop. In recent years it has been seeded in mixtures with other native tall grasses in the true prairie region.

Indiangrass seeds per pound average 175,000. A seeding rate of 25 to 30 pure live seeds (PLS) per linear foot in 36 to 40 inch rows for seed production is sufficient. Rates for pasture seeding should be seven to ten PLS pounds per acre (15 to 25 bulk pounds/acre). Seed should be planted 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep in a firm relatively weed free seedbed. Seedling vigor is good and stands are comparatively easy to establish where competition is controlled. Mowing above the height of the indiangrass has been used to reduce competition when weeds begin to severely encroach into the planting.

Available chemical sprays for use in the establishment of indiangrass are limited. Post-emergence broadleaf sprays have been used during indiangrass establishment.

Seed yields are good and can be harvested with a combine. Yields of 400 pounds per acre have been commonly harvested on managed stands.

Collections of indiangrass from east to west across Iowa prevent positive assessment of all pollination or chromosome characteristics. Plants are cross-pollinated and many hybrids are formed in the area of adaptation. For isolation requirements, indiangrass should be spaced a minimum of 900 feet from any other different indiangrass selection.

Indiangrass is adapted to most upland and some bottomland soils. Ecotypes are adapted to areas with as little as 14 inches to over 50 inches of average annual precipitation. The number of collections from each zone in Iowa guarantees the adaptation of releases to the entire zone.

Site Description:

Collections were made from the following locations (see attached) and included in the composite indiangrass, Northern Iowa origin (9062316).

Climate: The average annual temperature is 48 degrees Fahrenheit. July is the warmest month with an average high of 85 degrees and low of 64 degrees. January is the coldest month with an average high of 27 degrees and low of 8 degrees. The average annual precipitation for this region is 30 inches with much of this coming during the growing season. The average frost-free growing period runs from April 30 to October 6.

Availability of Plant Materials:

Breeders material is being produced by the Plant Materials Center, Elsberry, Missouri and the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) at Cedar Falls, Iowa.

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