

## Availability of Plant Materials

Seed stock of Prairie View Indiana Germplasm big bluestem will be maintained cooperatively by the USDA-NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife and made available to qualified parties for increase purposes. To request seed or further information contact:

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the NRCS Plant Materials Program website to learn more about using plants to address conservation problems.

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

### Rose Lake

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## PRAIRIE VIEW INDIANA GERMPLASM BIG BLUESTEM



*Photo courtesy of NRCS*

### Rose Lake Plant Materials Center

*East Lansing, Michigan*

# PRAIRIE VIEW INDIANA GERMPLASM BIG BLUESTEM

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (INDNR), Division of Fish and Wildlife announce the release of a "Selected" ecotype of Big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii* Vitman) for the Midwest and Great Lakes region.

As a "Selected release", this plant will be referred to as *Prairie View Indiana Germplasm big bluestem*.

The "Selected Release" is justified because sources and supplies of Indiana ecotype big bluestem are very limited and unable to meet the demand for this product. Propagation material of this ecotype is needed for ecosystem restoration and enhancement. The potential for immediate use is extremely high.

## Collection Site Information

Seed was collected from native stands (as designated by the INDNR and partners) of big bluestem within the State of Indiana. Seeds from 20 populations were collected from seven counties in Indiana during 1993. Seeds from those populations were combined and planted into a single crossing block in 1994. Seeds from that crossing block are the source seed for this release.

## Ecotype Description

Prairie View Indiana Germplasm big bluestem is a composite of 20 big bluestem collections and has features consistent with the species. It is a perennial, warm season bunchgrass with short, scaly rhizomes. Stems are erect, pithy and reach a height of 6-8 ft. at maturity. It is very leafy at the base lessening considerably up the stem. Leaf blades have long, silky hairs that are widely dispersed on the upper surface. Plants bear 2-6 racemes at the tip of the culms, and usually some smaller inflorescences from the leaf axils.

## Ecological Evaluation

Prairie View Indiana Germplasm big bluestem is a native Indiana plant material that has undergone no purposeful selection therefore should not differ in rate of spread, seed production, vigor or behavior from naturally occurring big bluestem in this area. Prairie View Indiana Germplasm was determined "OK to release" when evaluated through the "Environmental Evaluation of NRCS Plant Releases" worksheet. Seeds from the source field were planted in nine field plantings in central Indiana. Those field plantings were evaluated for adaptability, potential for invasiveness and usefulness in conservation plantings.

## Anticipated Conservation Use

The anticipated uses of Prairie View Indiana Germplasm include providing food/cover for wildlife, increasing species diversity, controlling erosion and restoring native plant environments.

Big bluestem attracts insects and provides seed that are used as food sources by songbirds, game birds and small mammals. Many wildlife species also utilize big bluestem for nesting, escape and winter cover. As this is a native plant species composite, it will be useful as a component in the restoration and diversification of native habitats. Because of big bluestem's large root system it may also be used in combination with other native warm and cool season grasses for erosion control.

## Anticipated Area of Adaptation

This species is found in dry to moist open areas throughout much of the United States, and is a major component of tall, mixed grass prairies. Prairie View Indiana Germplasm's known area of adaptation is the State of Indiana. Further testing will be conducted to determine the extent of adaptation across the northern United States. Plantings of this release outside the known area of adaptation should only be done following field testing in proposed use area.