

Registration of Southlow Michigan Little Bluestem Germplasm

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Southlow Michigan little bluestem [*Schizachyrium scoparium* (Michx.) Nash] germplasm (Reg. No. GP-1, PI 642397) was released 19 Sept. 2001 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), Michigan Association of Conservation Districts, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. This Source Identified Class (natural track) germplasm is eligible for seed certification as a source identified release under Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA) guidelines (AOSCA, 2003). Southlow Michigan little bluestem germplasm was given the designation ACC: 9084511 by USDA-NRCS and determined "OK to release" when evaluated through the "Environmental Evaluation of NRCS Plant Releases" worksheet.

Little bluestem is a perennial, warm-season bunch grass that grows 50 to 150 cm tall. It has very flat bluish basal shoots (hence its common name) and folded leaves that become reddish-brown at maturity. Clusters of silvery-white, tufted seedheads may persist into winter (Hitchcock and Chase, 1950; USDA-NRCS, 2006).

Southlow Michigan little bluestem is a multi-origin native germplasm with G0 seed assembled from 16 native stands (as designated by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division) in the southern half of Michigan's Lower Peninsula in 1999. The purpose of the assembly was to provide a genetically diverse little bluestem seed source representing populations that are native to Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Seeds were mixed and planted in a single crossing block without further purposeful selection. Seed harvested from this crossing block was released as Southlow Michigan little bluestem germplasm. The Southlow Michigan epithet connotes its origin in southern Lower Michigan.

Little bluestem grows in dry open areas throughout the USA. It attracts insects; provides food, nesting, and winter cover for birds and small mammals; and is a major component of tall and mixed grass prairies. Southlow Michigan little bluestem provides a genetically diverse, defined population for use in restoration and diversification of native habitats and for erosion control. Moreover, it will augment seed availability in Michigan for Federal and state programs (e.g., Conservation Reserve Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Grassland Reserve Program, and Michigan Landowner Incentive Program) that require or encourage the use of verified, regionally-sourced native grasses. Its known area of adaptation is the southern half of Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

Limited quantities of seeds are available on request from Dave Burgdorf (dave.burgdorf@mi.usda.gov) for five years after registration with CSSA. Afterward, seeds will be made available from the National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS). Recipients of seeds are asked to make appropriate recognition of the source of germplasm if it is used in the development of a new cultivar, germplasm, parental line, or genetic stock.

References

- Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies. 2003. Operational procedures, crop standards and service program publication. <http://www.aosca.org/2004%20Yellow%20Book,%20pdf.pdf>; verified 9 July 2007.
- Hitchcock, A.S., and A. Chase. 1950. Manual of the grasses of the United States. 2nd ed. U.S. Gov. Print. Off., Washington, DC.
- USDA-NRCS. 2006. The PLANTS Database. <http://plants.usda.gov>; verified 9 July 2007.

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