

Manhattan Plant Materials Center

Manhattan, Kansas



A newsletter in support of the Plant Materials Program for Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Nebraska

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Seed Origin For CRP

Field offices should inform and encourage producers to take a close look at seed tags **before** purchase to make sure the material is eligible for cost share. Both locally harvested seed and named varieties are eligible assuming they meet appropriate state FOTG specifications.

Common locally harvested seed is approved for use if it is properly tested and labeled, meets FOTG specifications, and falls within the recommended area of adaptation. The area of adaptation is specified within the appropriate state FOTG specification. For example, the state of Kansas specifies that native harvest seed should not be used more than 250-400 north of or 100-150 miles to the south from its point of origin. The reasoning behind this is that native species that grow over wide geographic areas are made up of many local ecotypes. Each of these local ecotypes has developed specific traits which causes it to be adapted to that particular area. For example, plants moved north from their point of origin tend to be more leafy and remain green longer than local ecotypes of the same species. If moved too far north, they will fail to produce seed and frequently fail to survive winter temperatures. Conversely, plants moved south of their point of origin tend to mature early in the season resulting in lower yields and are more susceptible to rust or other diseases compared to local ecotypes. These responses may be compensated for by changes in elevation. Movement to the

east or west is generally restricted by changes in precipitation, soils, or elevation.

Named varieties have known adaptation areas and levels of performance based on field trial evaluations. Named varieties may be developed by combining genetic traits from diverse sources of material which allow them a wider range of adaptation. Preference should be given to using adapted improved varieties whenever available. Approved varieties are provided for in the appropriate state FOTG specifications.

Beyond Kansas



Even though the Manhattan Plant Materials Center is physically located in the state of Kansas, its area of influence or service extends well beyond the political boundaries of Kansas. The Center's technology and products are distributed far beyond even its service area of Kansas, Nebraska, northern Oklahoma, and eastern Colorado. The Center's staff has shipped seed and plants practically from the west coast to the east coast and thousands of locations in

between. The plant varieties developed in Kansas are being grown, utilized for erosion control, prairie restoration, beautification, wildlife habitat, and many other uses practically from coast-to-coast. Many locations are commercial seed producers that increase and sell the varieties to the general public. Other locations receiving plant materials may be researchers with a special need for the materials for studies or projects that they have developed. Other sites may desire plants for a demonstration garden or educational centers to display native plant species. The Manhattan PMC attempts to accommodate anyone that has a legitimate need for the plant materials produced.

In addition to our plant materials the staff handles many requests for information concerning plant establishment, management, uses, harvesting, and seed processing of native grasses and forbs. Requests for information come from many different sources such as field office personnel, conservation district employees, university researchers, seed producers, forage producers, crop improvement association members, teachers and students. These information seekers can be at various levels of understanding concerning plants, all the way from well versed to simply interested in attractive flowering species. It is the Centers staff's responsibility to recognize what level of expertise the customer represents and then provide the needed information in an understandable format. The Center provides information to customers via tours, publications, or electronic media such as the internet or videos. The Center has many group tours that visit the facilities every year. In the past five years the center has provided tours or hosted meetings for over 1400 people. Guests at the Center range all the way from elementary school age

children to distinguished scientists from The Peoples Republic of China and Russia.

Should you or your group desire a tour or other information give the Center staff a call at **(785) 539-8761** or e-mail us at richard.wynia@ks.nrcs.usda.gov.

Three New Plant Releases

The Manhattan PMC announces the release of three plant species. The three releases are Atkins Germplasm prairie cordgrass, 'Southwind' common reed, and 'Kanoka' roundhead lespedeza. Both the Atkins Germplasm and 'Southwind' were cooperatively released with Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station. 'Southwind' and 'Kanoka' are cultivar releases while Atkins Germplasm is a selected class release.

'Kanoka' is recommended for use in plantings on roadsides, parks, and recreation areas for soil stabilization and beautification. It is a desirable component in warm-season grass mixtures, providing nitrogen input and adding protein to the consumed forage. It's forage is consumed by all classes of livestock. 'Southwind' and Atkins Germplasm are recommended for use in wet sites for soil stabilization, shoreline/streambank protection, wetland restoration, filter strips, and for rehabilitation of polluted marshes. Both of the grasses are vegetative releases.

The PMC maintains the foundation class material to provide to interested commercial seed/plant growers. A small amount of the material is also available to NRCS field offices, conservation districts, other local, state, and federal agencies for the purpose of research and or demonstration plantings. For more information, contact the Manhattan PMC at (785)539-8761.

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