

Introduction

Martin Germplasm and St. Lucie Germplasm of eastern gamagrass (*Tripsacum dactyloides* L.) are robust warm-season, perennial grasses with thick knotty rhizomes. Both are native to Florida. This grass is well suited for forage, site stabilization, and as an ornamental. Martin and St. Lucie were collected vegetatively in Martin and St. Lucie Counties, respectively.

Description

Martin eastern gamagrass grows to an average height of 47 inches. Average base width is approximately 15 inches and a canopy width of 28 inches. Mature plant size varies greatly depending on soil moisture and fertility. Stems are dark purple, and leaves are flat lance-shaped, with a pronounced midrib and scabrous margins averaging 57 inches long and 1¼ inches wide, and are bluish-green in color. It grows upright with leaves arching when they are mature.

St. Lucie Germplasm grows to an average height of 59 inches. Average base width is 17 inches with an average canopy width of 45 inches. Mature plant size varies greatly depending on soil moisture and fertility. Stems are dark red with flat stiff

leaves that have a pronounced midrib and scabrous margins averaging 32 inches long and ¾ inch wide. Growth habit of St. Lucie is upright divergent with a distinctive bluish hue.

Use

Plants are used best for landscaping and screening around buildings. Martin Germplasm and St. Lucie Germplasm may be used for soil stabilization and erosion control as well as for forage.



Adaptation

Eastern gamagrass prefers moist, well-drained fertile soils from full sun to partial shade. It tolerates a wide range of soil conditions, from sand to clay (as long as moisture is sufficient). Initial evaluations of Martin and St. Lucie Germplasm indicate adaptability to USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 8 – 10; however, the plants will not survive freezing temperatures for an extended period of time.

Establishment

Entire clumps can be planted at one time, or break the clumps into a minimum of 3-5 compound shoots for planting. Roots should be trimmed to a length of approximately 3 inches and top of shoot to 8 inches. Maintain moisture until well established. At time of planting, apply a small amount of slow release fertilizer to each plant. After established, fertilizer may be added according to soil test.

Management

Eastern gamagrass may be cut to a minimum of 12 inches stubble height in order to obtain fresh new growth if desired. Continuous cutting below this height will reduce plant vigor and

ultimately kill the plant. Cutting should be done at least 30 days prior to the first killing frost. Weed control can be performed mechanically or with herbicides labeled for use on eastern gamagrass.

Availability

Martin and St. Lucie Germplasm can be obtained by contacting the Brooksville Plant Materials Center.



For More Information

Brooksville Plant Materials Center
14119 Broad Street
Brooksville, Florida 34601
Phone: 352-796-9600

<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/flpmc/>

or

Plant Materials Specialist for Florida
P.O. Box 141510
Gainesville, FL 32614
Phone: 352-338-9544

or

any USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service office

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Martin Germplasm, St. Lucie Germplasm

Eastern Gamagrass

Tripsacum dactyloides L.



Brooksville Plant Materials Center, Florida