

## CREEPING BLUESTEM

*Schizachyrium scoparium*  
(Michx.) Nash var.  
*stoloniferum* (Nash) J. Wipff  
Plant Symbol = SCSCS3

Contributed By: USDA NRCS National Plant Data  
Center



From Hitchcock (1950)  
@ plants.usda.gov

### Alternate Names

creeping bluestem, *Andropogon stolonifer*

### Uses

Livestock readily grazes creeping bluestem throughout the year. It retains its nutritive value and stays green during the winter.

### Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values.

### Description

Grass Family (Poaceae). Creeping bluestem is a native, warm-season, rhizomatous perennial grass. The height is between 2 and 6 feet. The leaf blade is 1/4 to 3/8 inch wide; often 2 feet long with v-shaped or flat; abruptly tapered at tip. The leaf sheath is strongly flattened; often light purplish at base; upper parts of sheath, collar, and lower part of blade very hairy. The stem is solitary or few. The seedhead is several racemes, each 1 to 1-1/2 inches long, droop slightly at maturity; seedheads are commonly 1 to 2 feet long.

*Distribution:* For current distribution, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

### Management

Where double chopping with heavy rolling cutters has controlled saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), creeping bluestem is one of the first plants to become re-established if grazing is deferred 6 to 8 months following the treatment. Plants are weakened if more than 50 to 60 percent of the current year's growth by weight is removed by grazing.

### Establishment

Rhizomes grow actively in December and January, 12 to 14 inches in a single season. New leaf growth starts in January and February. Leaves stay green as long as 17 months. Basal leaves are usually only 4 inches long in 4 to 5 weeks. Creeping bluestem forms dense colonies and grows best in open areas, but tolerates 25- to 30-percent shade. Pure stands yield about 2 tons of air-dry forage per acre. Seed production is uncertain and erratic. It grows on a wide variety of soils in the sandhills and flatwoods.

### Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

Please contact your local NRCS Field Office.

### Reference

Leithead, H.L., L.L. Yarlett, & T.N. Shiflett. 1976. 100 native forage grasses in 11 southern states. USDA SCS *Agriculture Handbook No. 389*, Washington, DC.

### Prepared By & Species Coordinator:

*Percy Magee*, USDA NRCS National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Edited: 13may02 ahv; jul03 ahv; 20sep05 jsp; 070116 jsp

For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

*The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).*

*To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

*Read about Civil Rights at the Natural Resources Conservation Service.*