

Baskett Slough Germplasm of California Oatgrass

DESCRIPTION

Scientific Name: *Danthonia californica* Boland.
Common Name: California Oatgrass
Release Name: Baskett Slough Germplasm
(Accession 9040747)
Selected by: Corvallis PMC, NRCS, USDA
Origin: 123°15' West, 45° 00' North. Township 7S, Range 4W, Polk County, Oregon. Elev. 350-500' Mean annual precipitation 48".
Release cooperators: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon State University

BASKETT SLOUGH GERmplasm is a selected class release of California oatgrass that originates from natural stands on the Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Polk County, Oregon, approximately 11.5 miles west of the City of Salem. Like the species in general, this selection is a long-lived, medium textured, native perennial bunchgrass. The foliage is primarily basal and the stems are about 2 ft. tall. It was not bred or hybridized. However, specimens within the population ranked high in seed production (as in photo), vigor, foliage appearance, and basal width compared to 59 other sources in a common garden study. Pubescence, leafiness, fertile tillering, and other traits vary considerably within the Baskett Slough Germplasm which contains substantial phenotypic variability.

Seed collection and planting: California oatgrass is a low seed yielding species, with only 3-7 spikelets per spike and 3-10 florets per spikelet. However, hidden seed is also produced near the base of the lower sheaths. This can be harvested or collected separately. Maturity occurs between late June and early July in the Willamette Valley. Limited quantities of seed of Baskett Slough Germplasm are available to growers from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Plant Materials Center, 3415 NE Granger Ave, Corvallis, OR, or by collection when permitted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Willamette Valley NWR Refuge Complex.

Both an embryo and a seed hull/seed coat dormancy can exist. Therefore, current recommendations are for the seed to be: (1) scarified (dehulled), AND (2) fall sown (Sept. 15-Nov. 30) or pre-chilled (cold, moist stratification) for 45-90 days for maximum germination. Used alone, the suggested drilled seeding rate is 8-10 pounds/acre for most conservation uses. On average, there are 90,000-165,000 seeds/pound, with and without hulls respectively. Establishment rate is moderate compared to native blue wildrye. Use in mixes with other native grasses such as tufted hairgrass in prairie wetlands and Idaho or Roemer's fescue on uplands.



Uses: As a facultative upland plant, California oatgrass grows on both dry and moist sites with well to poorly drained soils. For the Baskett Slough Germplasm, recommended uses include upland and riparian revegetation, erosion control, wildlife cover/herbage, and restoration of oak savannas, open meadows, and the upper margins and transitional zones associated with prairie wetlands. This species tolerates heavy grazing and drought.

Suggested Area: Willamette Valley Ecoregion (<1250 ft), including the Umpqua Valley of Oregon (<1500 ft) and Clark and Cowlitz Counties of SW Washington (<1000 ft). This is similar to Sunset Western Garden Handbook climatic zone 6 and NRCS Major Land Resource Area A2 south of Toledo, WA. CH Zone 8.

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Dale Darris and Scott Lambert, February 2001. USDA-NRCS, Plant Materials Center, Corvallis, OR