

## HAVARD PANICUM

### *Panicum havardii* Vasey

Plant Symbol = PAHA2

Contributed by: USDA NRCS James E. 'Bud' Smith  
Plant Materials Center



Rudy G. Esquivel, USDA NRCS James E. 'Bud' Smith Plant  
Materials Center

#### Alternate Names

Havard's panicgrass, Havard's panicum, Havard  
panic

#### Uses

Havard panicum grows naturally on deep, active sand  
dunes and arroyos. It is useful for the stabilization of  
active sand dunes and arroyos. Harvard panicum  
produces low forage yield, and the forage is coarse  
and unpalatable when plants are in the mature stage.  
But, cattle will eat the forage of this grass when  
plants are in the early vegetative stages.

#### Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State  
Department of Natural Resources for this plant's  
current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species,  
state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

#### Description

Havard panicum is a perennial, warm-season, native  
grass with stout solitary culms and rhizomes  
elongated and scaly. Inflorescence is a panicle which  
is 7 to 15 inches long. The panicle is open, about 7 to  
15 inches wide with an ovate shape. Panicle  
branches are stiff. Seeds are nearly twice the size of  
switchgrass. Culms are decumbent and 25 to 63

inches long. Culm-internodes are covered with a  
waxy coating that gives a blue-green color and are  
hairless. Leaf sheaths are without a keel and without  
hairs on the leaf surface. Ligules are a ciliate  
membrane, 0.08 to 0.16 inches long.

#### Adaptation

Havard panicum grows in arroyos and sand hills of  
western Texas, southern New Mexico and northern  
Mexico (Hitchcock 1935). This grass, like giant  
sandreed (*Calamovilfa gigantea*), and blowout grass  
(*Redfieldia flexuosa*) are among the first native  
species to show up as stabilizers on deep, active, sand  
dune areas. Giant sandreed and blowout grass are  
common over a wide section of the southern United  
States, but Havard panicum is found only in Texas,  
southern New Mexico, and northern Mexico, in  
arroyos and on the extensive dune areas. It is  
prevalent in Ward, Crane, Winkler, Ector, and  
Andrews Counties of western Texas.

#### Establishment

Havard panicum is established from seed in the  
spring by either broadcasting on the sand dunes or  
sowing with a small grass drill at a depth of ¼ inch  
on flatter surface dune areas. Applying a thin layer  
of hay mulch or an erosion control type mat after  
seeding will retain moisture when it rains to aid in the  
seed germination.

An alternative is to propagate Havard panicum from  
rhizomes, harvested during the previous year, in the  
greenhouse in 1 gallon pots and transplant these  
rhizomes in the spring to sandy sites. Irrigation of  
these sandy sites would be necessary during the first  
growing season.

#### Management

Havard panicum is valuable for controlling erosion  
on deep sands subject to severe wind erosion.

When used for pasture the grazing value of the  
havard panicum can be fair at early vegetative stages,  
before the inflorescence stage, when plants are fresh  
with new growth. Do not overgraze and leave  
enough plant material for regrowth. Begin grazing  
when plants reaches a height of 12 inches; plants  
should not be grazed below a stubble height of 6 to 8  
inches. At the James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials  
Center near Knox City, Texas, the Havard panicum  
grown for seed production is swathed and baled for  
hay, after the seeds are harvested.

**Pests and Potential Problems**

In a seed production field at the NRCS/James E. 'Bud' Smith Plant Materials Center near Knox City, Texas the plant species did not encounter any pest or potential problems.

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

There are currently no cultivars of Havard panicum, in the commercial seed company.

**Prepared By:**

*Rudy G. Esquivel*, USDA NRCS James E. 'Bud' Smith Plant Materials Center, Knox City, Texas

**Species Coordinator:**

*Rudy G. Esquivel*, USDA NRCS James E. 'Bud' Smith Plant Materials Center, Knox City, Texas

Edited: 14jun07 jh; 29jun07 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](#).*