BLACK GRAMA
Bouteloua eriopoda (Torr.) Torr.
Plant Symbol = BOER4

Contributed By: USDA NRCS National Plant Data Center

From Hitchcock (1950)
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Alternate Names
woollyfoot grama, hairyfoot grama, navajita negra

Uses
Black grama is a choice forage grass grazed by all livestock. It is cut for hay on some ranges in wet seasons.

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). Black grama is a native, warm-season, stoloniferous perennial grass. The height is between 10 and 20 inches. The leaf blade is narrow and rolls inward during dry periods, giving it a threadlike appearance. The leaf sheath is short and clasps the stem tightly. The ligule is a ring of short hairs. The stem is solid, the lower half of the internodes woolly, and the upper half smooth. The seedhead is 3 to 8 spikes per seedhead and 18 to 20 spikelets per spike.

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

Management
Overgrazing easily kills this grass. To improve black grama ranges, defer grazing two successive years during the growing season and do not graze more than 50 percent of current growth by weight during dormancy. To maintain ranges, defer grazing for one growing season every third year.

Establishment
During mild winters and with adequate moisture, lower stems stay green all winter. New leaves grow from buds at nodes on stolons and from auxillary buds at basal nodes. The seeding habits are not dependable. In some years, when a good seed crop is produced, seed viability is low. It reproduces primarily from stolons. A healthy plant generally produces 6 to 9 stolons. Two favorable successive growing seasons are required for reproduction by stolons: First year, to produce stolons; second year, for stolons to take root and establish new plants. It generally grows in pure stands. It grows mostly on dry gravelly or sandy soils and seldom grows on clay loams or adobe (clay) flats. Black grama is characteristically a lower altitude grass (3,500 to 5,500 feet elevation), but occasionally grows at elevations of 7,000 feet.

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.

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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>