

A Conservation Plant Released by the Natural Resources Conservation Service
Los Lunas Plant Materials Center, Los Lunas, NM

‘Lovington’ blue grama

Bouteloua gracilis (H.B.K.)
ex Steud.



‘Lovington’ blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*) was released in 1963 by the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center and the New Mexico State University Agricultural Science Center.

Description

‘Lovington’ blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*) is a perennial, long-lived, warm-season bunchgrass. The plants are uniform in growth, and when in production, stems average 32 inches in height with a leaf height reaching from 20 to 22 inches. Plants are fairly erect, produce more culms and seed heads than the average; basal leaf growth is dense; and leaves are of medium width.

Source

The original seed was collected in 1944 near Lovington, New Mexico on a loamy, upland range site at an elevation of 3,900 feet. Annual precipitation for this area is 14.3 inches.

Conservation Uses

‘Lovington’ blue grama can produce an average of 15 percent more forage than other strains of blue grama under cultivation. A similar increase in forage production has been observed in range plantings as well. It is a highly-palatable grass for livestock on a year-round basis.

‘Lovington’ also is suitable in grass mixes used in erosion control, low maintenance turf plantings, and surface mine revegetation. It is commonly used as a low maintenance turf planting, such as rough areas of a golf course or between rows in multiple-row windbreak plantings, and in locations prone to drought.

Area of Adaptation and Use

‘Lovington’ blue grama is recommended for use in areas of eastern New Mexico and southeastern Colorado where annual precipitation is 12 inches or more.

‘Lovington’ is recommended in range reseeding mixtures on medium- to fine-textured soils.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Proper seedbed preparation is necessary when trying to establish any native grass. For the best results, seed of blue grama should be drilled on a firm, weed-free seed bed. Broadcasting the seed is an alternative planting option. However, the seed should then be incorporated to provide seed-to-soil contact, or at least pressed into the soil with a culti-packer.

Ecological Considerations

Problems with insects or diseases have not been encountered in range plantings of ‘Lovington’ blue grama. However, for maximum seed production under cultivation, apply insecticides to control thrips which can have an effect on seed-set in all strains of blue grama.

Seed and Plant Production

Under irrigation and control of insects, seed yields can average more than 200 pure live seed (PLS) pounds per acre. For a first-year planting, expect approximately half that amount.

- Plant seed in rows 30-40 inches apart for cultivation and irrigation purposes.
- Plant at a seeding rate of two PLS lbs/acre.
- Plant in warm soil and no deeper than ½-inch on beds to prevent irrigation water from reaching the seedlings before becoming established. Seed must have seed-to-soil contact.
- Apply the appropriate quantities of soil nutrients based on soil analysis results prior to sowing seed. Delaying the first irrigation until mid-July may result in higher yields due to later flowering and seed setting when temperatures decline.
- Apply insecticides between flowering and seed ripening to reduce seed damage from thrips; apply herbicides for weed control. Clean fields are essential for the production of high-quality seed.

Availability

Breeder and foundation seed of 'Lovington' blue grama is limited. Please contact the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center for the availability of seed.

For more information, contact:
Los Lunas Plant Materials Center

1036 Miller Road

Los Lunas, NM 87031

Tele: 505-865-4684

FAX: 505-865-5163

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

Citation

Conservation Release Brochure 'Lovington' blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*) (H.B.K.) Lag. ex Steud. USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Los Lunas Plant Materials Center, Los Lunas, NM 87031. Published May 1964; edited July 2015ds

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



United States Department of Agriculture

This is a joint release between New Mexico State University's Los Lunas Agricultural Science Center and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Los Lunas Plant Materials Center.

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