



Common Flora of East Texas Version 1

**USDA/NRCS East Texas Plant
Materials Center**

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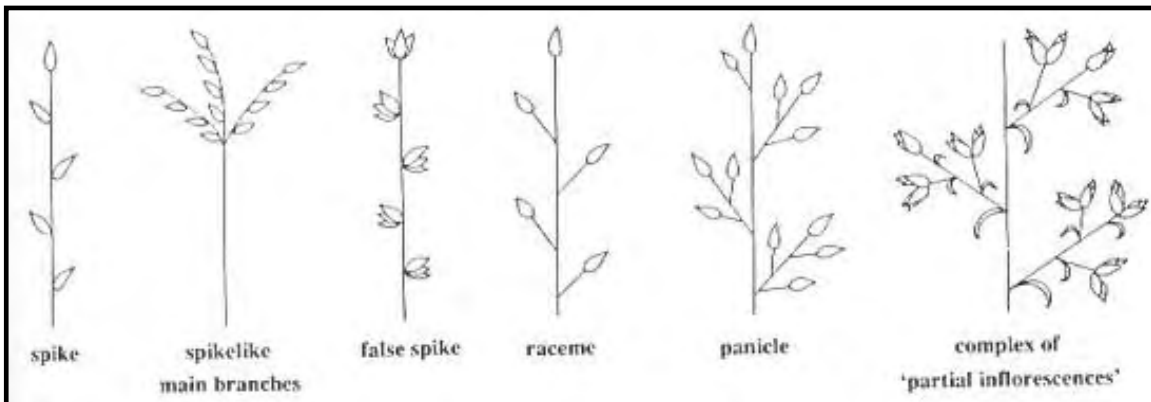
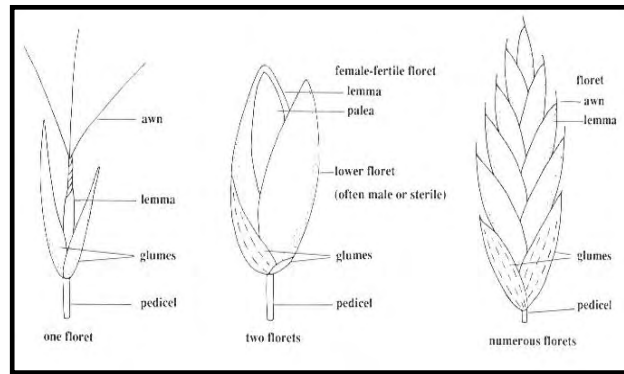
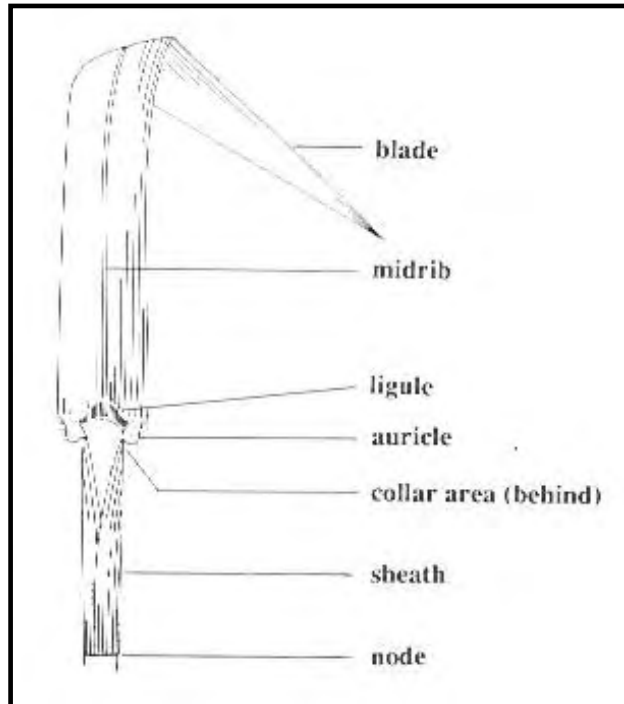
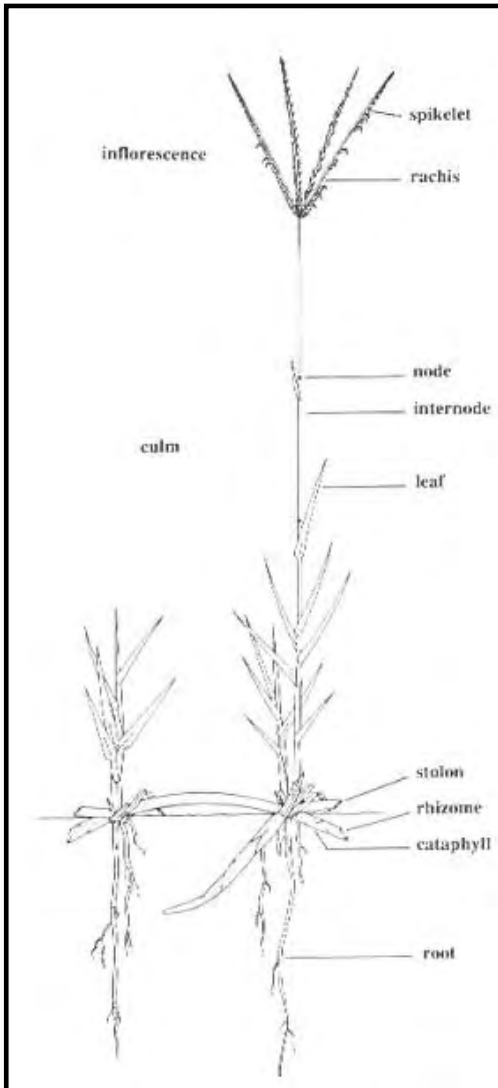
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Typical Grass Structures

Images courtesy of South African National Biodiversity Institute, South Africa



A close-up photograph of common grasses, likely a species of oat, showing the seed heads in detail. The grasses are green and have long, thin blades. The seed heads are brown and have a characteristic drooping, spike-like appearance. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a field of grasses.

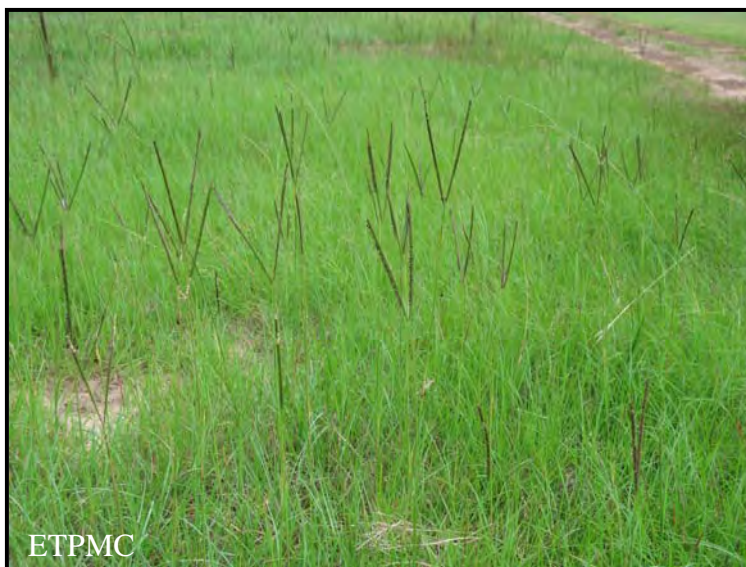
Common Grasses

Bahiagrass

Paspalum notatum Flueggé

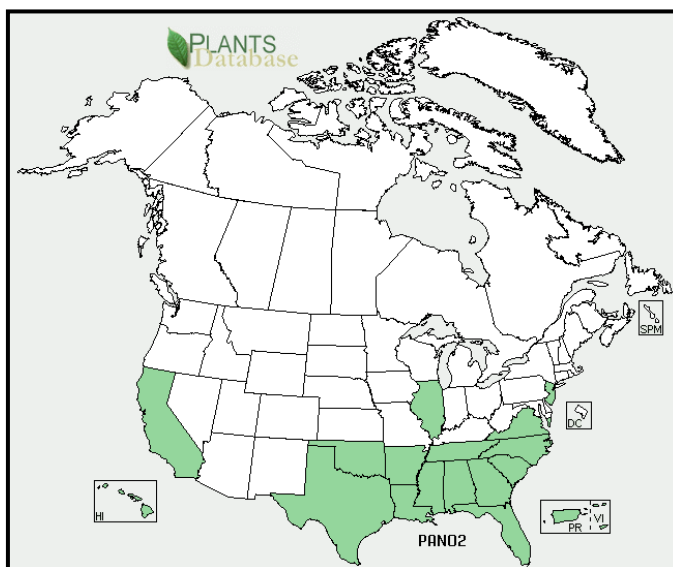
Description

- Introduced (Cuba, South America)
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Bunch grass, capable of forming sod
- 1-2 feet tall
- Rhizomatous
- Usually only 2, “V” shaped seed heads
- May have up to 3 seed heads
- Hairless stems
- Light green color
- Leaves have hairy margins



Distribution

Bahiagrass is found throughout the southeastern United States from Texas to the east coast, north to Virginia. It can also be found in California and Illinois. It is adapted to both heavy and sandy soils, and is widely planted as a pasture grass and on right-of-ways. It is tolerant of droughty conditions.



Key Characteristics

- Predominantly 2 seed heads, “V” shape
- Flowers May – November
- Stem is hairless
- Leaves grow near base of plant
- Stems flattened at base
- Base of stem is purple
- Large, oval shaped seed
- Short, dense, woody rhizomes
- Leaf sheaths overlap at base



Uses

- Pasture and Hay
- Erosion Control

Comments

Bahiagrass is an introduced species that has been widely used as forage and ground cover on right-of-ways. It is very competitive, and is capable of taking over areas; forming monotypic stands. It produces viable seed and spreads via rhizomes; out competing many native plants. It is competitive in young pine plantations, but may be used as silvipasture with larger trees. It is valuable for forage and hay production, but tends to escape from pastures and can become a nuisance in areas it is not desired. It is used as a turf grass in some areas, but it will not cut cleanly. Mechanical cutting generally twists the plant off rather than cutting it and it gives a ragged, un-kept appearance when mowed. The tall and numerous seed stalks also detract from its use as a turf grass. It produces large seeds that are used by small mammals and birds.

Barnyard Grass

Echinochloa sp.

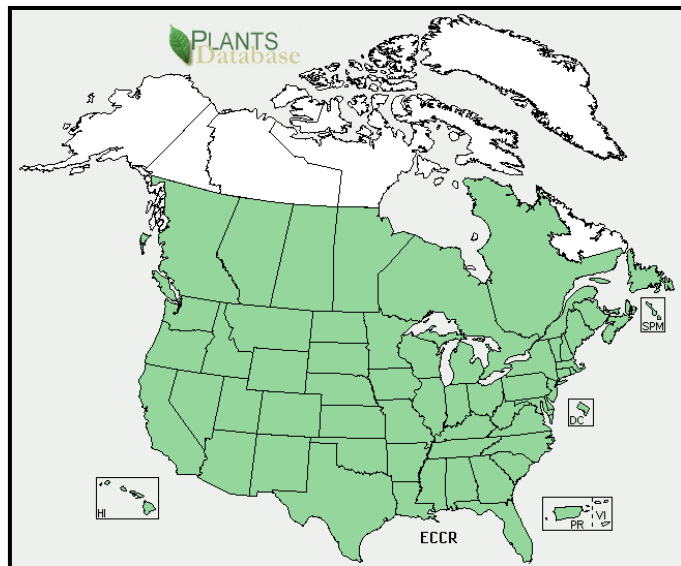
Description

- Introduced
- Warm Season
- Annual
- Bunch grass
- 2 - 5 feet tall
- 4 – 8 inch seed heads
- Wide leaves
- Seed head is straw color when mature



Distribution

Barnyard grass and its relatives are found throughout North America, excluding the northern most reaches of Canada and Alaska. They are adaptable to a wide range of soil conditions, but prefer, low, moist areas. They will be absent in dry areas.



Key Characteristics

- Branched seed head with many seeds on each branch (raceme)
- No ligule
- Seed has single awn, and can have a thick, bushy appearance
- Wavy leaf edge
- No hair on stems
- Bright green
- Flowers July - September
- Favors low, moist sites



Uses

- Erosion Control
- Wildlife Habitat

Comments

Barnyard grass is considered a nuisance weed in many areas, especially agricultural fields. It makes suitable forage when young, but becomes less palatable as it matures. It is not dependable as a forage grass. It is a prolific seed producer, up to 40,000 seeds per plant. Many species of birds feed on seeds from this genus, and some species are cultivated in other regions of the world as a food crop. Because of its preference for low, moist areas and wide distribution; it is an important food source for many species of waterfowl. Sites that favor its growth often flood in the fall, creating areas for ducks to forage for seed. Barnyard grass is a favored plant for those managing wetland areas for waterfowl.

Beaked Panicgrass

Panicum anceps Michx.

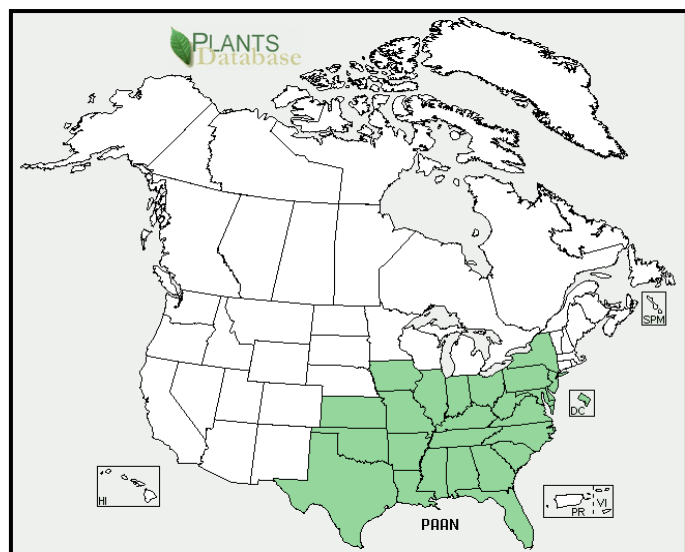
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Rhizomatous
- Green foliage color
- 2 to 4 feet tall
- Branched seed head
- Seed head ranges between 6 - 14 inches in length
- The ligule is a minute membrane with a dense area of hair where leaf attaches to stem
- The smooth seed is encased in a husk



Distribution

Beaked panicum is found from Texas and Kansas eastward to New York State. It is tolerant of a wide range of conditions and soil types, but favors moist to wet soils along marshes and bottomlands. It will also tolerate 30 to 35 percent shade.



Key Characteristics

- Rhizomatous
- Seed husks resemble a bird's beak
- Seed is smooth, surrounded by husk
- Prefers moist, shady sites
- Seed head often purple or red colored
- Open, multi-branched seed head
- Flowers July - November



Uses

- Wildlife Habitat
- Restoration

Comments

Beaked panicum is grazed by cattle, horses, and occasionally deer. The seed is an important food source for many upland birds and waterfowl. Beaked panicum is a prolific seed producer; however, many of the florets are empty of viable seed. This grass also has high amounts of dormant seeds. The dormancy problems with this species limit its use as a conservation plant. It will not produce a rapid stand, as seed may lay dormant for long periods of time. If seeding, it is best to plant in the fall, and let the seed over winter in the soil. Beaked panicum may be established by planting rhizomes. Planting rhizomes, though more labor intensive, is one way to ensure stand success. This is especially true if planted in sites that may be highly erodible.

Bermudagrass

Cynodon dactylon

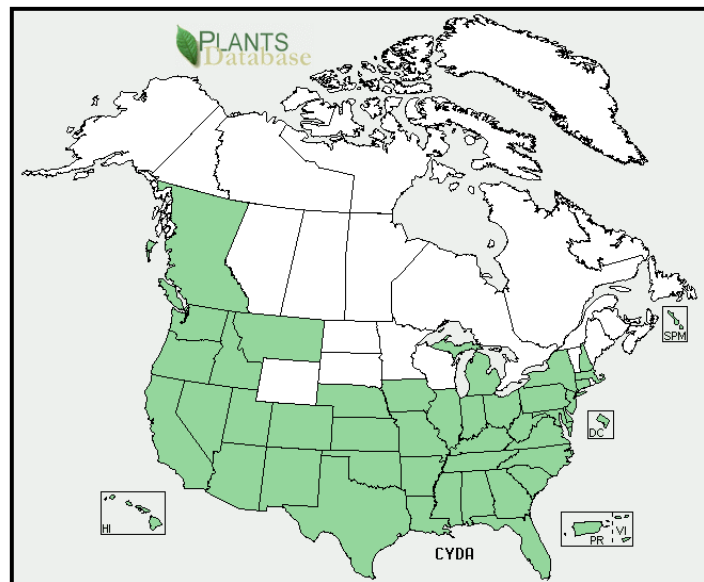
Description

- Introduced (Africa)
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Creeping sod former
- Pale green
- 4 – 18 inches tall
- Stoloniferous and rhizomatous
- Ring of white hair where leaf meet the stem
- Seed heads are in whorl with 3-7 spikelets



Distribution

Bermudagrass is found throughout most of the United States except for a few of the most northern states. It prefers deep, moderately well drained soils. It will tolerate and grow in 100°F temperatures, low rainfall, once established, and withstands inundation for short periods. It has difficulty surviving in areas with extremely harsh winters, and does best in the warm climate of the south.



Key Characteristics

- Alternate leaf arrangement
- White collar of hair on stem
- Stoloniferous and rhizomatous
- Whorl type seed head with 3-7 spikes
- Seed head has purple color when in flower
- Short, 4-18 inches tall
- Pale green, may be bluish green
- Will form dense sods
- Flattened at nodes



Uses

- Pasture and Hay
- Erosion Control
- Turf

Comments

Bermudagrass is a very important pasture grass in the south. However, it is considered a noxious weed in some states and maybe highly invasive. It grows well in hot climates, and spreads rapidly via rhizomes, stolons, and seed. It is a common invader in lawns, landscaping, and flower bed, but may also be used as a lawn or turf grass in some areas. It is cut for hay, and is useful for soil stabilization due to its deep root system, rapid growth, and wide area of adaptation. Stands of bermudagrass require fertilization to be maintained, and must have some form of periodic disturbance to inhibit stands from becoming sod bound. With out these measures, stands will weaken and other species will take over. Improved varieties include: 'Santa Ana', 'Tifway', 'Tifgreen', 'Tifdwarf', 'Tufcote', 'Brazos', 'Quickstand', 'Coastal', 'Coastcross-1', and 'Midland'.

Big Bluestem

Andropogon gerardii Vitman

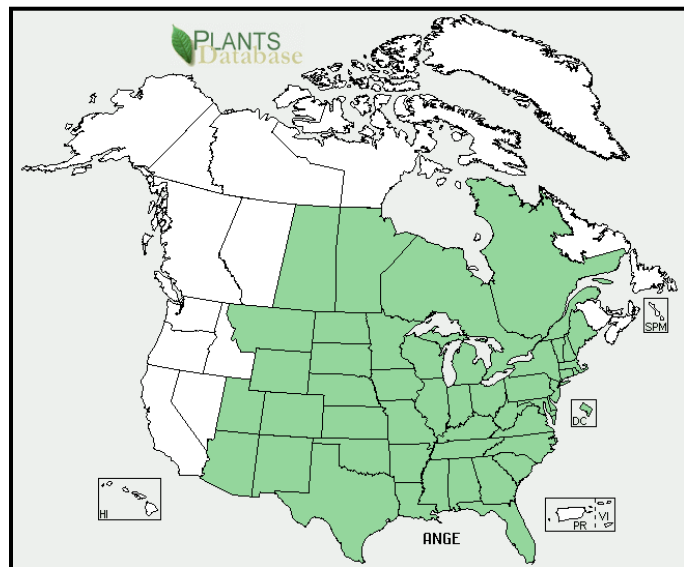
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Can form sod in solid stands
- Takes on bunch grass shape in sporadic stands
- Blue sheen coloration on stem and purple coloration on seed heads
- 6-8 feet tall
- Seed head forms a 3 pronged, turkey foot shape



Distribution

Big bluestem is found throughout the eastern 2/3rds of the United States and Canada. It is a major component of the tall grass prairie region, and can be found on moderate to excessively drained sites. It will tolerate a wide range of soil types and conditions. It is capable of growing in shallow soils, but will not tolerate wet bottomlands and heavy clays.



Key Characteristics

- Turkey foot shaped seed head, but may have up to 7 spikelets per seed head
- Chalky, blue sheen coloration to stalks
- Purple coloration of seed head
- Lower leaves usually have small, silky hairs
- Flowers July-September
- Stems remain throughout winter
- Leaves turn reddish color after frost
- Bottom of plant is very leafy
- Flowers



Uses

- Pasture and Hay
- Restoration
- Erosion Control
- Wildlife Habitat
- Native Landscaping / Xeriscaping
- Buffer Strips

Comments

Big bluestem is one of our most important native grasses. It is one of the “Big 4” grasses of the tall grass prairie region, and is relished by livestock. It will decrease if over grazed. It makes excellent native forage and cover for wildlife. Big bluestem stands up to snow well; providing cover and nesting habitat for game birds. The red seed heads and silver blue stems make this plant an attractive feature in native landscaping. It is easily grown from seed, and is commercially available from native seed companies. Released cultivars include: ‘Bison’ (ND), ‘Bonilla’ (SD), ‘Champ’ (NE, IA), ‘Kaw’ (KS), ‘Earl’ (TX), ‘Niagara’ (NY), ‘Pawnee’ (NE), and ‘Rountree’ (IA).

Broomsedge Bluestem

Andropogon virginicus (L.)

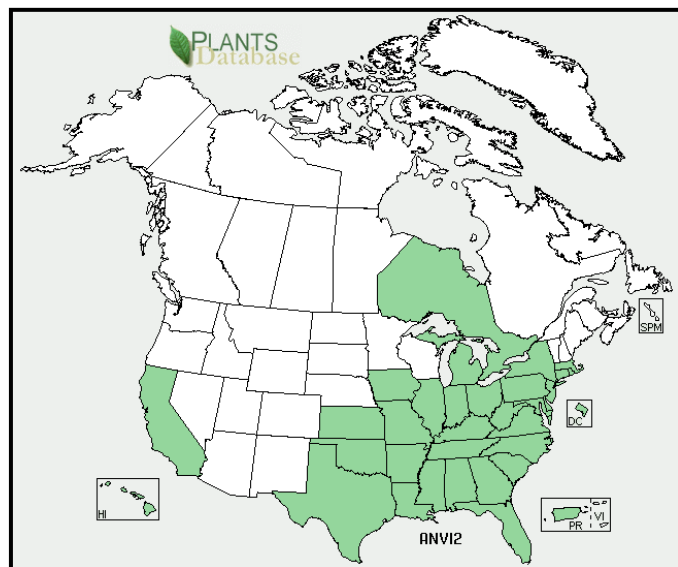
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Bunch grass
- Greenish yellow plant color
- 2 to 4 feet tall
- Numerous stems with seedheads
- Seed heads are along the stems
- Fringed ligule about 1/16" long where leaf attaches to stem
- Seed has fine hairs and a single awn extending from its end



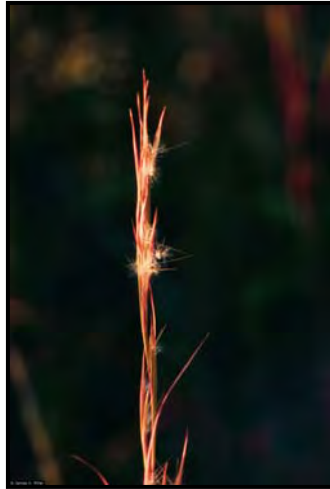
Distribution

Broomsedge is commonly found throughout most of the eastern half of the United States. This species is best known as an old-field invader and an indicator of overgrazed and low fertility sites. Broomsedge will grow on a wide variety of medium and fine textured soils. It will not tolerate shade.



Key Characteristics

- Seed head color and shape
- Fringed ligule
- Fluffy seed
- Single awn extending from seed
- Yellowish-green plant color
- Flat leaf blades, partially folded, with a few hairs
- Stem is flattened at base and smooth
- Distinct rusty, straw color in fall
- Flowers September - November



Uses

- Pasture and Hay
- Wildlife Habitat
- Native Landscaping
- Ground Cover

Comments

Broomsedge bluestem is grazed in its early stages, but is generally not considered high quality forage for live stock, especially as the plant matures. If not properly managed, broomsedge will invade stands of introduced pasture grasses. Broomsedge can be reduced by grazing it heavily in the spring and then deferring grazing for 60 to 90 days to allow other, more favorable grasses, a chance to dominate. It is a prolific seed producer, and seed remains attached to the seed head until late winter. The seed is used by several bird species and small mammals during late winter, and the standing plant material creates important habitat for quail. Broomsedge bluestem turns a distinct and attractive, rusty, straw color in the fall. It provides ground cover in sandy, low fertility sites that have trouble supporting more favorable vegetation.

Brownseed Paspalum

Paspalum plicatulum Michx.

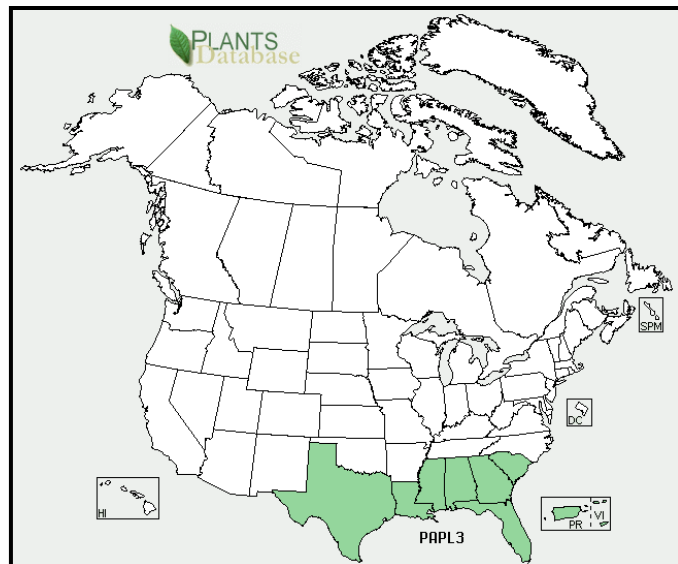
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Rhizomatous
- Variable colors from green to gray green or blue green
- 2 - 4 feet tall
- Seedhead (inflorescence)
3 - 7 racemes, each 2 ½ – 3 inches long
- Brown membrane ligule approx. 1/8 inch long where leaf attaches to stem



Distribution

Brownseed paspalum is found throughout Florida and North Carolina to East Texas. It grows on areas where the soil has been disturbed or heavily grazed. This grass grows well on strongly acid to neutral, poorly drained clay loam soils and well drained, deep sandy soils. Brownseed paspalum prefers wet meadows, drainage ways, and roadside ditches where the plants are able to spread by rhizomes and form dense colonies.



Key Characteristics

- Stem is compressed, often purplish at base
- Leaf blade is slightly folded, stiff, bluish green, 8 - 20 inches long
- Brown membrane ligule
- Mature seed is shiny, medium to dark brown color
- Foliage varies from green to gray green or blue green



Uses

- Erosion Control
- Wildlife Habitat
- Grazing

Comments

Brownseed paspalum is found in abundance along roadsides, firebreaks, and forest openings, but is less common in range conditions. Though palatable in its early stages, it is of minor importance as forage for livestock. Foliage becomes tough and less palatable by mid season. However, because much the plant remains green during the winter, cattle may graze this grass more heavily after frosts have burned back more desirable grasses. Wildlife will occasionally graze Brownseed paspalum, and many bird species, including game birds and waterfowl, utilize its seed. Stands are subject to ergot infection, a fungus that produces a hallucinogenic toxin. Grazing should be avoided if ergot is present.

Bushy Bluestem

Andropogon glomeratus (Walter) Britton,
Sterns, and Poggenb.

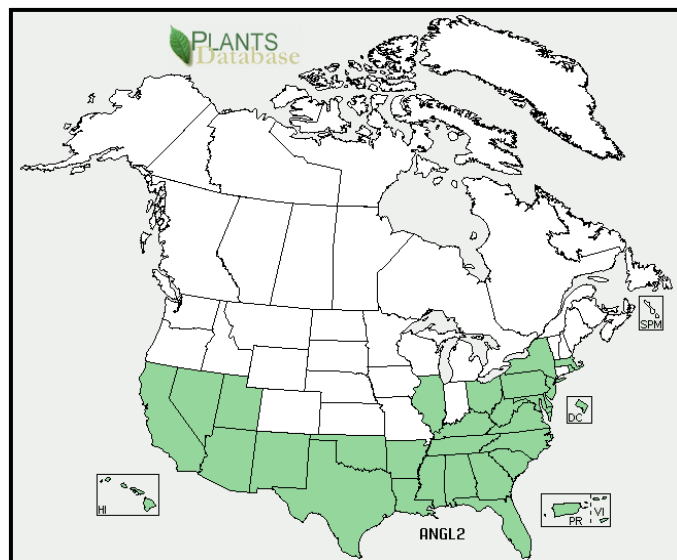
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Bunch grass
- Rusty, straw color when mature
- 2 to 5 feet tall
- Seed head is a large dense bundle
- Small membranous ligule where leaf attaches to stem
- Seed has fine hair and a single awn extending from its end



Distribution

Bushy bluestem is found from California and Nevada east to New York State. This species is adapted to a wide range of soils and occurs in low wet sites, ditchbanks, and marshes. The grass grows on low fertility sites and prefers slightly acidic soils levels.



Key Characteristics

- The seed head is very distinct and compact, brush shape
- Smooth, round shaped ligule
- White, fluffy seed
- Single awn extending from seed
- Wide range of habitat
- Rusty, straw color when mature



Uses

- Wildlife Habitat
- Native Landscaping

Comments

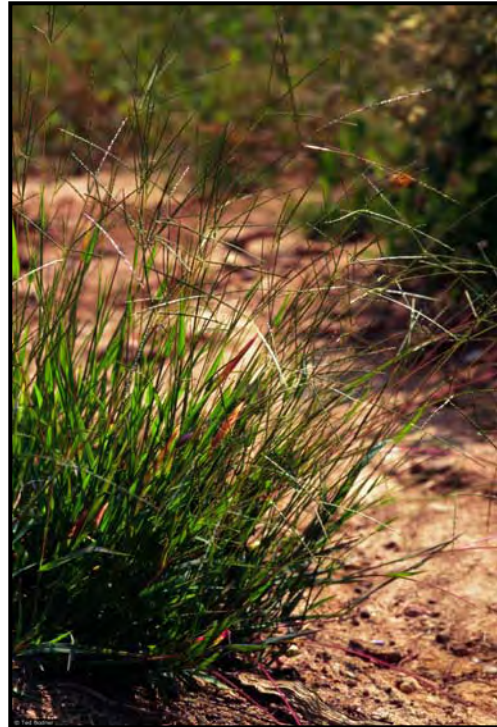
Bushy bluestem grows on low sites, and has little value as a forage grass. It grows in sites that typically do not burn well, and old growth inhibits animals from utilizing the new growth in the spring and summer. It has attractive fall color and seed head, and maybe used for native landscaping in low, moist areas. Some species of song bird use the seed and it provides some cover for game animals.

Hairy Crabgrass

Digitaria sanguinalis (L.) Scoop

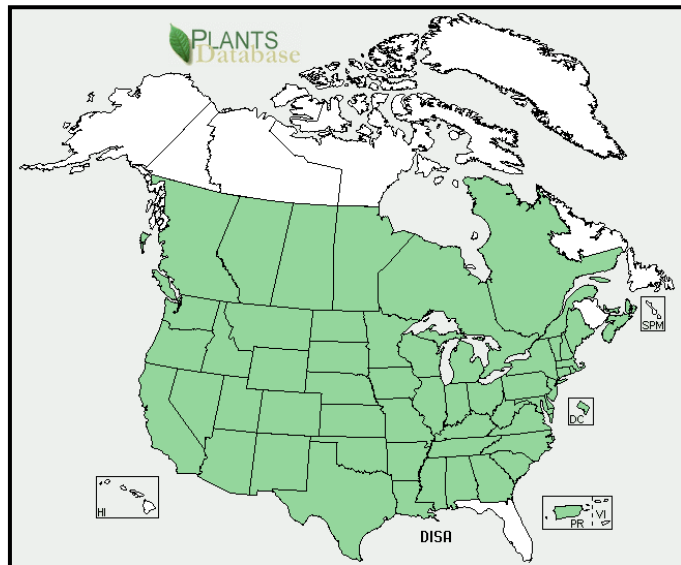
Description

- Introduced (Europe)
- Warm Season
- Annual
- Grows to 2 feet in height
- Shallow rooted
- Bunch type grass
- Will tack down at nodes as they touch the soil surface and spread
- Seed heads thin, 2 - 10 finger like branches
- Hairy leaf sheath and leaf
- Edges of leaf may be uneven and serrated, especially near the stem



Distribution

Crabgrass is present throughout most of North America. There are many sub species of this grass. It is tolerant of a wide array of soil types and climatic regimes. It is a pest in lawns, agricultural fields, and flower beds, and can be found almost anywhere the soil has been disturbed.



Key Characteristics

- Tacks down at nodes
- Flowers May – November
- Thin, finger like seed heads
- Hairs perpendicular to leaf and stem
- Alternate leaf arrangement
- Shallow rooted
- Leaf margins uneven or serrated



Uses

- Pasture and Hay
- Erosion Control
- Wildlife

Comments

Crabgrass is an introduced species that is extremely invasive. It spreads by tacking down at the nodes, and produces great quantities of viable seed. Its seed is used by many species of game bird, song birds, and waterfowl. It is palatable to livestock and white-tailed deer and turkey will occasionally graze it. It will produce heavy growth during wet years, and is sometimes cut for hay. Some sub species have been commercially developed and released for forage. However, several species of this genus are considered noxious weeds. It is an invader in over grazed native pastures, lawns, agricultural fields and flower beds.

Eastern Gamagrass

Tripsacum dactyloides (L.) L.

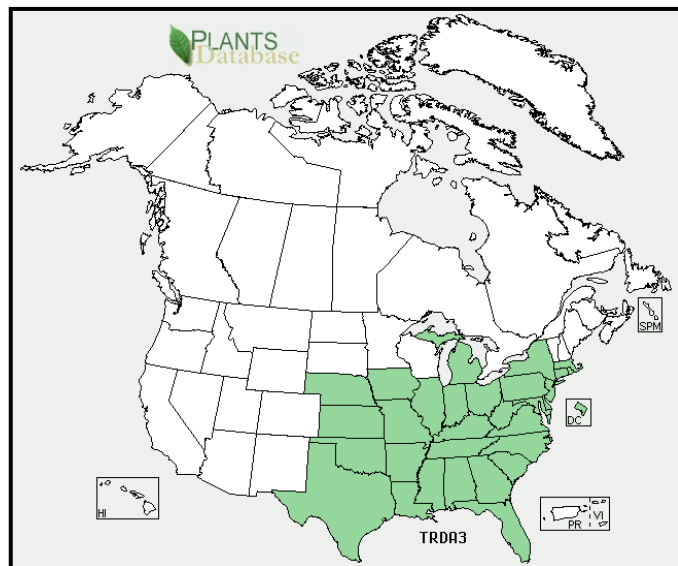
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Grows from large clumps, 1-4 feet in diameter
- Can form thick sod in solid stands
- Short, thick, scaly rhizomes
- Seed produced on long stalks
- Grows 6-10 feet in height
- Seed are hard capsules stacked one on top of the other



Distribution

Eastern gamagrass is found throughout the eastern half of the United States, north to New York and Nebraska. It favors moderately well to poorly drained, non alkaline soils. It is commonly found in lowland areas, and is tolerant of flooding.



Key Characteristics

- Hard, capsule like seed stacked end on end
- Large, thick, scaly rhizomes
- Edges of leaves are saw like, especially when stroked against the grain
- Seed produced on very long stalks
- Prefers wet, lowland areas
- Flowers June – September



Uses

- Pasture, Hay, Silage
- Restoration
- Erosion Control
- Wildlife Habitat
- Buffer Strips

Comments

Eastern gamagrass is extremely palatable to livestock and wildlife. Unlike most grasses, it maintains high nutritional value during and after seed set. Proper management is imperative to maintain healthy stands. Cattle will destroy stands through preferential grazing, and must be rotated properly to allow stand recovery. This ancient relative of corn is capable of producing tons of biomass, and is one of the most productive native hay grasses. It responds well to fertilization and grows in areas too low or wet for other major native grasses. Eastern gamagrass seed requires cold, moist, stratification before planting. Seed is commercially available. Released varieties include: 'Pete' (KS), 'Iuka IV' (OK), 'Jackson' (TX), 'Medina' (TX), 'Highlander' (MS, GA), 'Bumpers' (AR), 'Verl' (OK).

Florida Paspalum

Paspalum floridanum Michx.

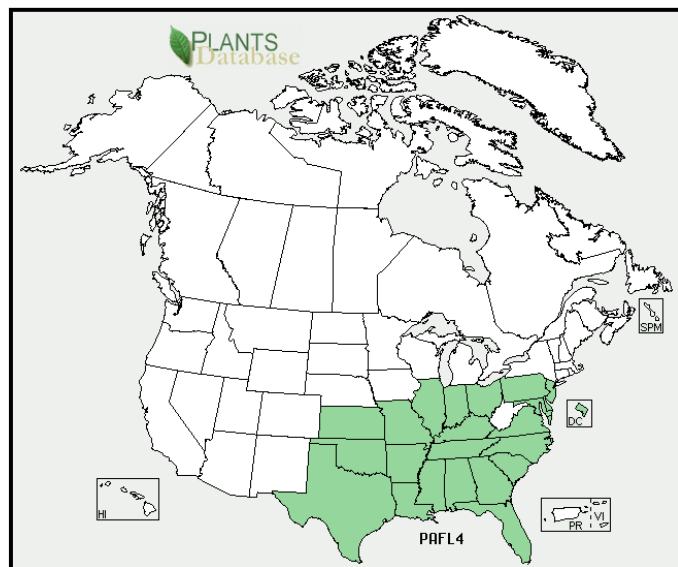
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Bunch grass
- Variable color, green to chalky blue green
- Averages 3 feet tall, may reach 6 feet
- 2 to 3 racemes, 3 to 4 inches long
- Seed head ranges between 2 and 5 inches in length
- Firm brown ligule about 1/8 inch long where leaf attaches to stem



Distribution

Florida paspalum is found throughout the southeast, Great Plains, and Midwest. This grass prefers sites with moist, well drained soils, but will tolerate drier sandy sites and poorly drained flats with neutral to acid pH. It is often seen in open woods, field edges, fire breaks, etc.



Key Characteristics

- Seed head color and shape
- Seed is enclosed in a smooth husk
- Hairy stems and leaves
- Color variable, green-silver
- Long broad leaves
- Robust growth
- Young plants have red – purple stems
- Flowers May - November



Uses

- Wildlife Habitat
- Restoration
- Erosion Control
- Buffer Strips



Comments

The young leaves of Florida paspalum are palatable and nutritious to livestock. However, as the plant matures, the foliage becomes tough, less nutritious, and deteriorates. Florida paspalum is especially useful for wildlife habitat. The plants provide excellent cover and the seeds are readily eaten by turkey, quail, and other gamebirds. Of the paspalums found in the longleaf pine – bluestem range, this is the most robust, and it has the largest grain of any of the southern range grasses. Seed is commercially available; ‘Harrison’ Florida paspalum was released from the East Texas Plant Materials Center in 2004.

Goosegrass

Eleusine indica (L.) Gaertn.

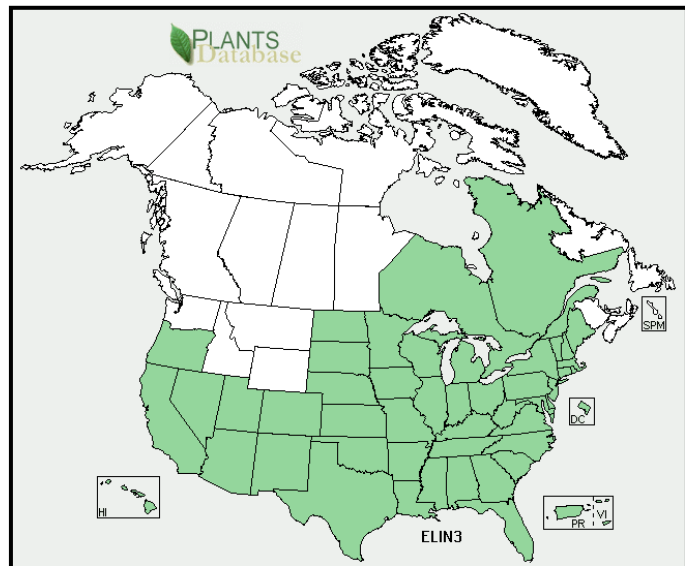
Description

- Introduced (South America)
- Warm Season
- Annual
- Succulent, shiny, dark green color
- 4 – 30 inches tall
- Sometimes stoloniferous
- Bunch grass
- Shallow rooted
- Stands up to foot and tire traffic well



Distribution

Goosegrass is found throughout most of the United States and eastern Canada. It is absent in Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana and portions of western Canada. It is originally from South America and is best adapted to warm, subtropical to tropical climates. It can be found in disturbed areas along roadsides and ditches, and is a common invader in lawns, pastures, and agricultural fields. It will tolerate compacted soils, and is adapted to a wide range of soil types.



Key Characteristics

- 2 – 5 spikelets per seed head
- 4 seed heads in an “X” configuration very common
- Seed head has a “zipper” or stacked “V” appearance
- Dark, shiny green
- Grows in small bunches
- Seed head similar to crabgrass, except more robust
- Grows in small clumps
- Hairy where leaves join stem and on lower leaves



Uses

- No known uses

Comments

Goosegrass is listed as an invasive weed throughout much of the United States. It is an invader of lawns, landscaping, and agricultural fields. It is insignificant as a forage grass. It stands up exceptionally well to pedestrian and vehicle traffic and is difficult to weed by hand.

Green Sprangletop

Leptochloa dubia (Kunth) Nees

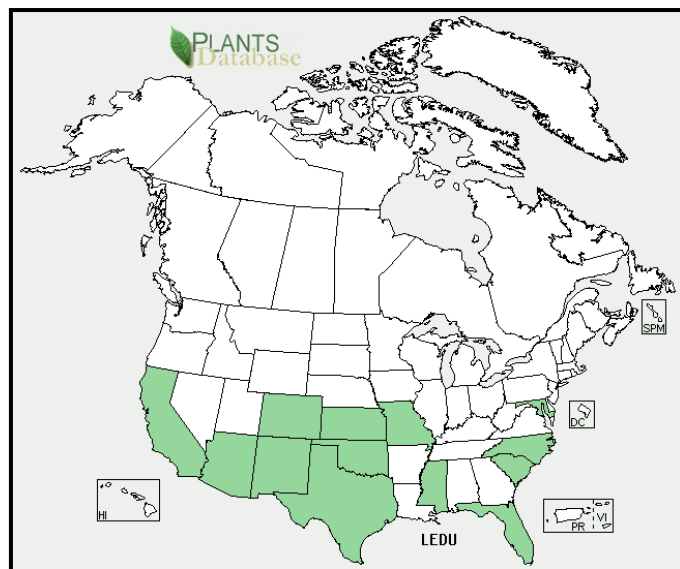
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial, short lived
- Bunch grass
- 1 - 3 feet tall
- No rhizomes
- Spreads via seed



Distribution

Green Sprangletop is distributed across the southern half of the United States. It prefers sandy soils, and is intolerant of moist areas or areas with a high water table. It is very drought hardy.



Key Characteristics

- Hair on stems
- Dull, blue green color
- 5 – 20, well spaced branches per seed head
- Seed head is open and nodding
- Hairy ligule
- Rough texture
- Flowers May - November



Uses

- Erosion Control
- Wildlife Habitat
- Buffer Strips
- Pasture / Range



Comments

Green sprangletop is not native to the piney woods of east Texas; however, it is often used as filler in seed mixes for wildlife and conservation plantings. It is capable of producing a rapid stand when planted. However, because it is short lived; it will not persist. This allows for soil protection until other, slower to establish natives to gain a foot hold. It has moderate levels of protein, and is palatable to both livestock and wildlife. Small mammals and birds will use the seed.

Indiangrass

Sorghastrum nutans (L.) Nash

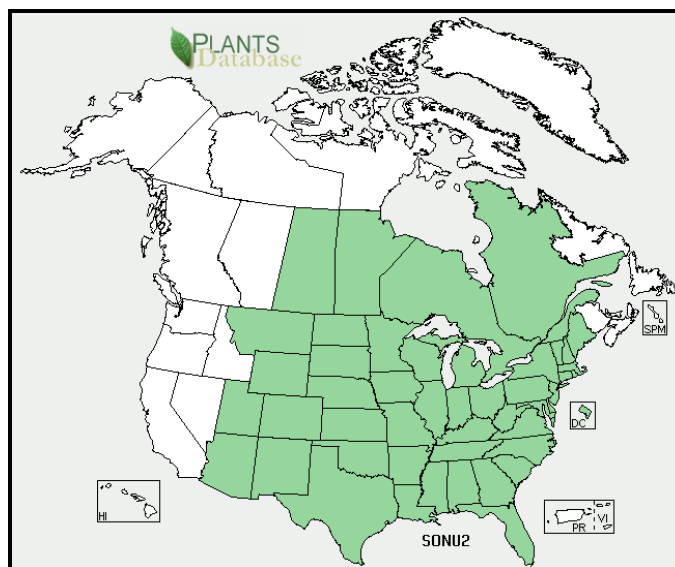
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Bunch grass
- Variable color, green-silver blue
- 3-5 feet tall, max height 8 feet
- Golden, plume like seed head
- Seed head 4 - 12 inches in length
- V shaped ligule where leaf attaches to stem
- Seed has fine hair and a single awn extending from its end



Distribution

Indiangrass is found throughout the eastern 2/3rds of the United States and Canada, this species is a common component of the tall grass prairies. It favors deep, well drained, floodplain soils, but is tolerant of a wide range of soil textures, pH, and drainage regimes.



Key Characteristics

- Seed head color and shape
- V or Notch shaped ligule
- Seed has small hairs
- Single awn extending from seed
- Wide range of habitat
- Color variable, green-silver
- Flowers July-September



Uses

- Pasture and Hay
- Restoration
- Erosion Control
- Wildlife Habitat
- Native Landscaping / Xeriscaping
- Buffer Strips

Comments

Indiangrass is an extremely versatile native. It is one of the “Big 4” grasses found in the tall grass prairie region. It is highly palatable to all classes of livestock, and will decrease if over grazed. It makes excellent native forage and cover for wildlife. It also makes an attractive addition to native landscaping, and can be used in buffer strips. It is easy to grow from seed, and is commercially available from native seed companies. Released cultivars include: ‘Holt’ (NE), ‘Llano’ (NM), ‘Lometa’ (TX), ‘Osage’ (KS and OK), ‘Oto’ (NE and KS), ‘Rumsey’ (IL), ‘Tomahawk’ (ND and SD); Cheyenne (informal release, OK); source identified releases from northern, central, and southern Iowa, and northern and western Missouri.

Johnsongrass

Sorghum halepense

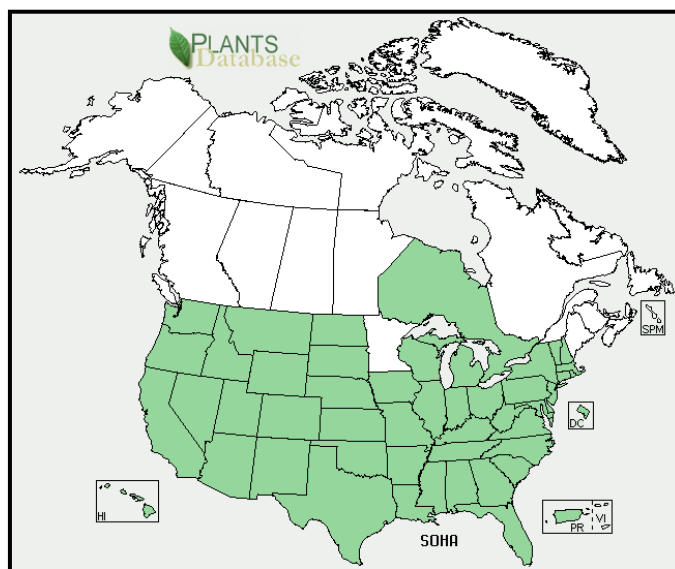
Description

- Introduced (Africa, Mediterranean, India)
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- 3-8 feet tall
- Rhizomatous
- Wide leaves with distinct, white mid-veins
- Stiff, hairless stems
- Leaves are hairless and have rough edge
- Prominent white fringed membrane where the leaf meets the stem
- Reddish brown seed on open, branched, panicle



Distribution

Johnsongrass is distributed nationwide. It is originally from the Mediterranean, India, and Africa. It has adapted well to agricultural areas of the United States and spreads rapidly. It can be found in open areas, agricultural fields, roadside, ditches, power line right-of-ways, and just about anywhere the soil has been disturbed and sunlight is available.



Key Characteristics

- Distinct white mid-vein in leaves
- Seed head has a “Christmas tree” shape with reddish brown seed
- Prominent, white membrane where leaf meets the stem
- Leaves and stems are hairless
- Sharp, scaly rhizomes
- Flowers April-November



Uses

- Pasture and Hay
- Erosion Control
- Wildlife Habitat

Comments

Noxious Weed: Johnsongrass was brought to the United States in the 1830s for use in the livestock industry. It is very aggressive and spreads rapidly. It is listed as a noxious weed in many states. It does provide rapid ground cover, and several species of birds feed on its seed; however, it often out competes more beneficial and desirable native plants. It is toxic to livestock if heavily fertilized, grazed during dry summers, or after a frost. It is a prolific seed producer and also spreads via rhizomes. It is capable of forming dense, monotypic stands, and can be extremely difficult to control or eradicate.

Little Bluestem

Schizachyrium scoparium (Michx.) Nash

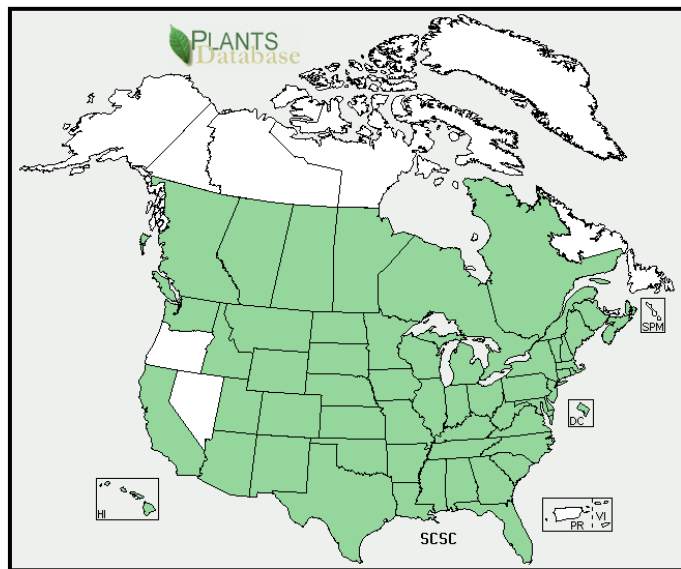
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Bunch grass
- Green to silver blue color
- Foliage turns wine colored after frost
- 2-5 feet tall
- Shoots near soil are flattened and reddish blue in color
- Seed are tufted and have light feathery appearance
- Large root system with short rhizomes



Distribution

Little bluestem is found throughout most of the United States. It is also found in all but the most northern provinces of Canada. It prefers moderate to well drained soils with a pH of 7 or slightly greater, but will tolerate a wide variety of soil textures and depths. It also grows well in rocky soils and requires very little in terms of fertility.



Key Characteristics

- Mid height grass
- Seed is fluffy with white tufts
- Extremely wide distribution
- Seed head has a zig-zag shape when mature
- Color variable, green-silver blue turning red after frost
- Flowers July-September
- Upright, even in winter
- Ring of hair where leaf meets the stem (ligule)



Uses

- Pasture and Hay
- Restoration
- Erosion Control
- Wildlife Habitat
- Native Landscaping / Xeriscaping
- Buffer Strips

Comments

Little bluestem is the most widely distributed and abundant of the “Big 4” native grasses. It is a mid height grass, usually 2-4 feet in height, but may attain 8 feet under ideal conditions. It makes an attractive plant for landscaping with its bright green leaves, wine colored stems, and white tufted seed heads. It is good forage, and makes excellent winter range for cattle when supplemented with protein. Being a bunch grass, it provides excellent cover for game birds and small mammals. It is readily established from seed and is commercially available. Released varieties include: ‘Aldous’ (KS), ‘Camper’ (NE, KS), ‘Cimmaron’ (KS, OK), ‘Pastura’ (NM) and ‘Blaze’ (NE, KS).

Longleaf Uniola

Chasmanthium sessiliflorum (Poir.) Yates

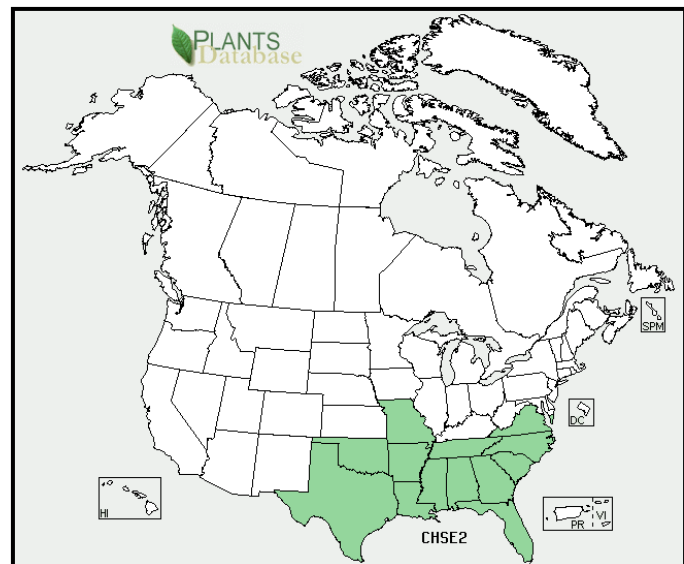
Description

- AKA: Longleaf Woodoats
- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Bunch grass
- Grows in tufts from rhizomes
- 2 to 3 feet tall
- Spikelike panicle 8 to 20 inches long
- Flowers are clustered along the panicle
- Leaf blade is 12 to 24 inches long and ½” wide; flat at top
- Mature seed are black, 1/10” long



Distribution

Longleaf Uniola is adapted from east Texas and Oklahoma to the Atlantic coast, north to Virginia. This grass is commonly found in the loblolly-shortleaf pine areas. It prefers shade and can not tolerate full sunlight. Longleaf Uniola is adapted to fertile moist, bottom and upland soils of fine and medium textures. However, it will grow on low fertility soils.



Key Characteristics

- Grows in shaded conditions
- Short, fringed ligule where leaf attaches to stem
- Reproduces by seed and rhizomes
- Spikelike panicle with flowers clustered sporadically on panicle
- Evergreen
- Increases after burning
- Flowers June – October
- 1 – 3 leaves per stem



Uses

- Wildlife
- Native Landscaping
- Silvopasture
- Restoration

Comments

Longleaf uniola is only moderately palatable to livestock. Because it can not withstand full sun, it is insignificant as forage. It does provide cover for wildlife, and birds will feed upon the seed. Being an evergreen bunch grass, longleaf uniola shows potential as native landscaping, especially in shaded areas.

Maidencane

Panicum hemitomon J.A.

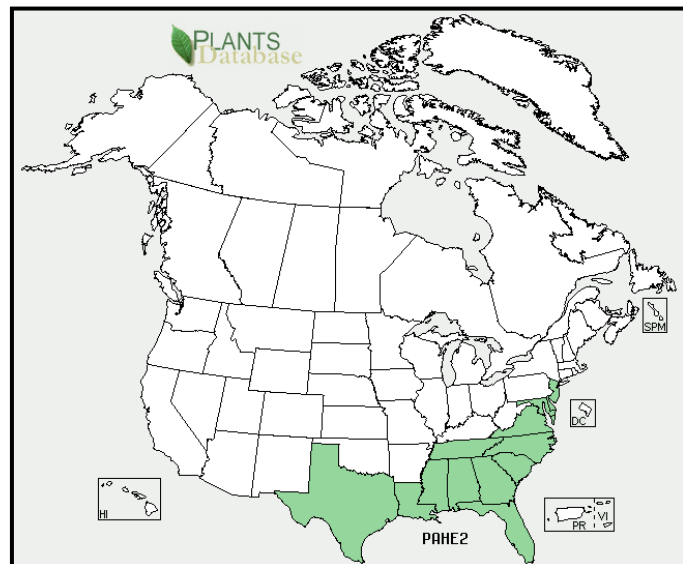
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Rhizomatous
- 2 - 5 feet tall
- Very fine seed
- Mat forming
- Very vigorous



Distribution

Maidencane is found throughout the southeastern United States, from Texas to Delaware. It is one of the dominate, fresh water, wetland plants in this region. It thrives in shallow, fresh water marshes and their margins. It is adapted to coarse and fine textured soils with neutral pHs.



Key Characteristics

- Very thin, upright, delicate seed head, up to 12 inches long
- Leaves are alternate, and overlap on stem
- Leaves come off stem at 45 degree angle
- Highly rhizomatous
- Found in low, wet areas
- Membranous ligule
- Flowers May-July, if at all



Uses

- Erosion Control
- Wildlife Habitat
- Pasture / Range

Comments

Maidencane is highly palatable, and has high a degree of digestibility and crude protein. It is prolific in the amount of biomass it produces. One acre is capable of supporting one animal unit for 6 months of grazing. However, it loses its palatability as it matures in the fall. Maidencane typically depends on vigorous rhizomes for reproduction, and does not always produce a seed crop. Waterfowl and game will browse new, tender shoots. Because of this plants rapid growth rate and rhizomatous nature, it makes an excellent barrier for shoreline protection. It should be noted that maidencane can become a nuisance by dominating a site. It is capable of producing dense, monotypic stands, and can out compete other plants with favorable wildlife benefits. It is fire tolerant, but mowing and herbicides can be used to create openings to encourage biodiversity, or landing areas for waterfowl.

Purpletop

Tridens flavus (L.) Hitchc.

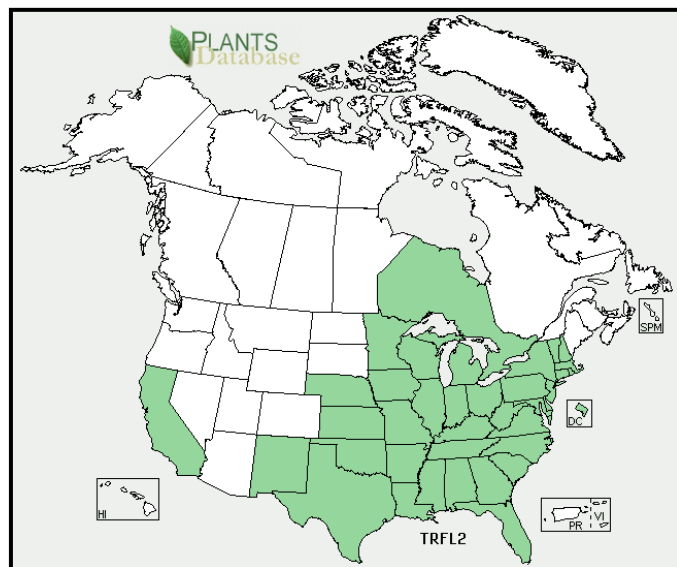
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Bunch grass
- Glossy green color
- 3-5 feet tall
- Open, purple seedhead
- Seed heads are 8 - 14 inches in length
- A ring of short hair comprises the ligule where leaf attaches to stem
- Seed has fine hair and a single awn extending from its end



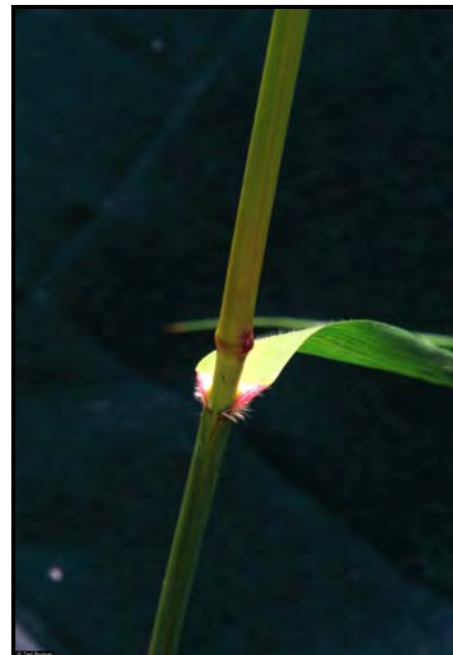
Distribution

Purple top is found throughout the eastern half of the United States. It is adapted to bottomlands and uplands. Purpletop will grow on a wide variety of soils and is tolerant of low fertility conditions and shade. The plant is also drought tolerant. On favorable sites, purpletop will spread rapidly by seed if unhindered.



Key Characteristics

- Leaf blades are flat, approx. ½" wide and 10 - 28 inches long
- Leaves are slightly hairy on upper surface
- Glossy green foliage
- Wine colored seedhead
- Branches of the seedhead droop and are covered with an oily substance
- Wide range of adaptation
- Clumps are 6 to 8 inches in diameter
- Flowers August - November



Uses

- Wildlife Habitat
- Native Pasture
- Native Landscaping

Comments

Purpletop is readily grazed by livestock until first frost, and the seeds are utilized by several bird species in the fall, including bobwhite and turkeys. It is an attractive native grass with its bright, glossy green foliage and brilliant, wine colored seed heads. It has potential as an attractive addition to native landscaping; however, it is capable of spreading rapidly. Seed is not commercially available, and it is not generally used in restoration projects at this time.

Splitbeard Bluestem

Andropogon ternarius Michx.

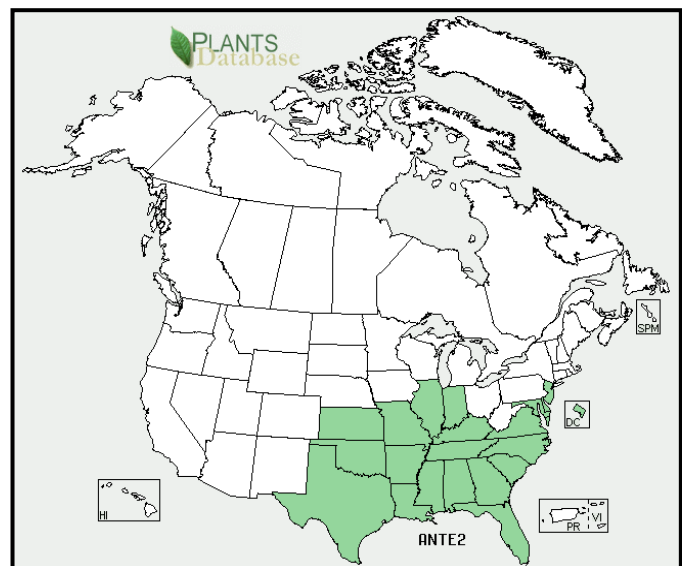
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Bunch grass
- Variable color, green to chalky-green
- 3-6 feet tall
- White, fluffy seed
- Seedheads in pairs up to 2 inches in length
- Rounded ligule is small, clear with hair where leaf attaches to stem
- Seed has fine white hair and a single awn extending from its end



Distribution

Splitbeard bluestem is found throughout the southeastern United States from Texas east to Delaware. It is found on dry sandy soils of coarse and medium textures but is tolerant of a wide range of pH, and drainage regimes.



Key Characteristics

- Fluffy, paired seed head
- Rounded ligule with small hairs
- Seed has small hairs
- Single awn extending from seed
- Wide range of habitat
- Color variable, green-silver
- Stems turn red in fall



Uses

- Pasture and Hay
- Restoration
- Wildlife Habitat
- Native Landscaping

Comments

Splitbeard bluestem is grazed by cattle while it is young, but it is not a highly desirable forage grass. It is an invader in abused native pastures and low fertility sites. This grass is not aggressive and usually does not dominate a site. This species will tolerate periodic burning. However, annual burning followed by grazing tends to eliminate it from the vegetative stand. It provides cover for game animals and game birds, and some species of bird use the seed. It makes excellent nesting habitat for bobwhite. It is valuable for use in sloped areas with sandy soil to prevent erosion.

Switchgrass

Panicum virgatum (L.)

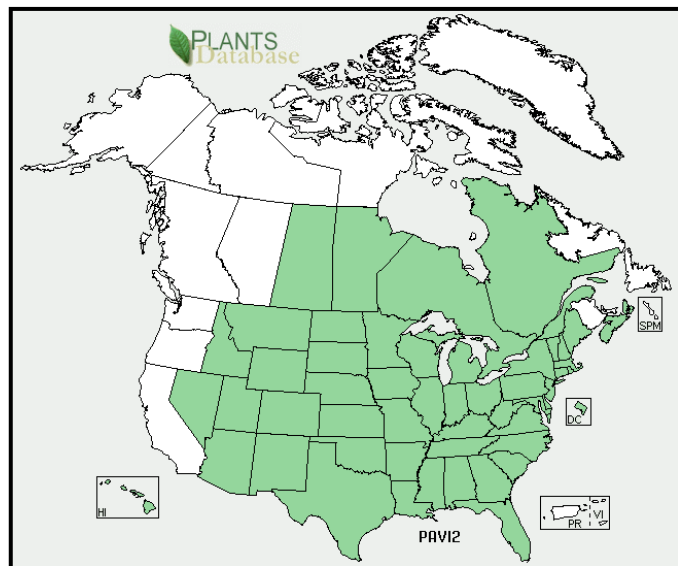
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- 3-6 feet tall, maybe taller under ideal conditions
- Large, open, branched seed head
- Will form sod
- Hairy tuft where leaf meets stem
- Rhizomatous
- Leaves ¼ to ½ inch wide and up to 18 inches long



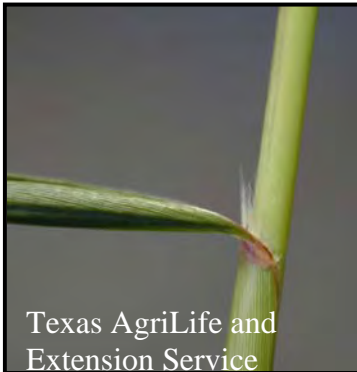
Distribution

Switchgrass is found throughout the United States, barring the west coast states, and most of Canada. Switchgrass is a major component of the tall prairie region, and can be found on a wide variety of soils. It prefers low, moist areas, but its large root system makes it fairly drought resistant, allowing it to occupy drier sites as well. It does not do well in heavier soils.



Key Characteristics

- Approximately 1/8th of fine hair where leaf meets stem
- Large, open seed heads
- Leaves are fairly narrow
- Stems are stiff and hairless
- Smooth, shiny seed
- Flowers July-September



Uses

- Pasture and Hay
- Restoration
- Erosion Control
- Wildlife Habitat
- Bio-fuels
- Buffer Strips

Comments

Switchgrass is one of the “Big 4” native grasses. It is very nutritious to all classes of livestock, and proper management should be practiced to prevent stand decline from over grazing. Switchgrass provides important winter cover for wildlife, and its seed is readily eaten by many bird species. Monotypic stands of switchgrass are not favorable for game bird habitat. Dense stands make it difficult for birds to flush from and travel under. For habitat, it is best when mixed with other native bunch grass and forbs. Switchgrass is capable of producing vast quantities of biomass. It is currently being researched as a potential source of biofuel. Seed is commercially available, and released varieties include: ‘Alamo’ (TX), ‘Blackwell’ (OK), ‘Cave-In-Rock’ (IL), ‘Dacotah’ (ND), ‘Forestburg’ (SD), ‘Kanlow’ (OK), ‘Nebraska 28’ (NE), ‘Shawnee,’ ‘Shelter’ (WV) (cultivars); Grenville (NM) (informal release); Miami (Dade Co, FL), Stuart (Stuart, FL), Wabasso (Wabasso, FL) (source identified releases)

Vasey's Grass

Paspalum urvillei Steud.

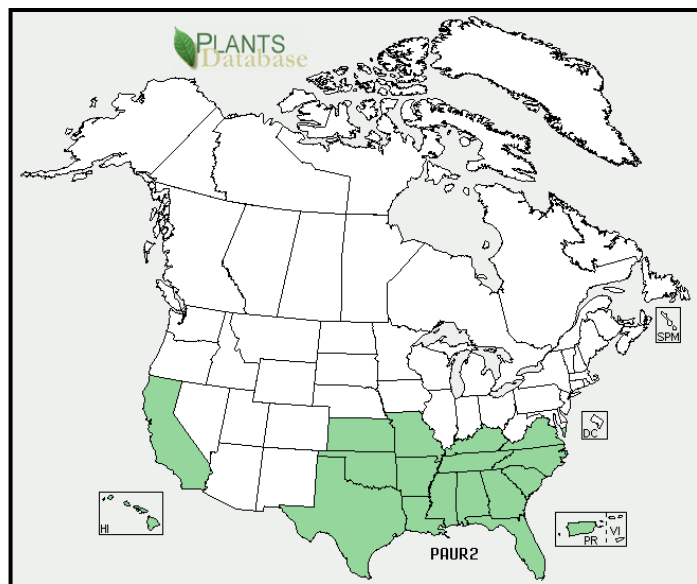
Description

- Introduced (South America)
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Bunch grass
- Alternate leaf arrangement
- 3-7 feet tall
- Thick, knotty rhizome
- Leaves are densely haired at stem
- Long seed head with 12 – 25 spikelets
- Wide, tapering leaves, mostly near base
- White mid-vein
- Dense, short hairs on seed head



Distribution

Vasey's grass can be found in the southeastern United States and California. It prefers moist areas and can be found in pastures, forest plantations, stream sides, right-of-ways, and open forests. It prefers moderate to poorly drained soils.



Key Characteristics

- Very hairy where leaf meets stem
- Seed head appears fuzzy, short hairs
- Flowers April – December
- Seed has pointed tips
- Seeds are rust colored when mature
- Many spikelets on seed head



Uses

- Pasture and Hay
- Erosion Control
- Wildlife Habitat



Comments

Vasey's grass may be invasive or weedy in some areas. It was brought to the United States from South America as a forage plant. It produces a fairly large seed that is occasionally used by birds and small mammals. As a wildlife plant it is insignificant, though it does provide some cover. It has potential for use in highly erodible areas as a pioneering species.

Virginia Wildrye

Elymus virginicus L.

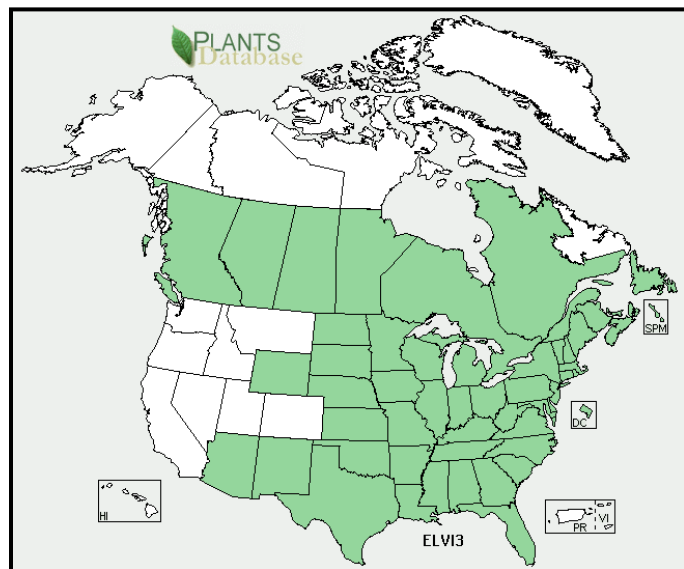
Description

- Native
- Cool Season
- Perennial
- Bunch grass
- Variable color, green - silver blue
- 2 - 4 feet tall
- Seed head has dense, medium length awns
- Seed head 2 - 6 inches in length



Distribution

Virginia wildrye is found throughout the eastern 2/3rds of the United States and all of the southern, Canadian providences. It is typically found in moister sites than Canadian wildrye, and will tolerate more shading. It prefers heavy, fertile soils, but is extremely adaptable.



Key Characteristics

- Seed head remains straight at maturity
- Short, membranous, rigid ligule
- Densely awned, wheat like head
- No hair on stems or leaves
- Color variable, green waxy, blue-green or silver
- Flowers May - July



Uses

- Pasture and Hay
- Restoration
- Erosion Control
- Wildlife Habitat
- Buffer Strips

Comments

Virginia wildrye is one of the few cool season native grasses found in the east Texas area. It is extremely palatable to livestock and will decrease with out proper grazing management. It spreads via seed and tillering. It can be confused with Canadian wildrye which is a more robust plant with longer awns. It should be cut early in the season when used for hay to avoid ergot contamination. Northern Missouri Germplasm Virginia Wildrye was released in 1999 by the Missouri Plant Material Center for use in northern Missouri.

Blackeyed Susan

Rudbeckia hirta (L.)

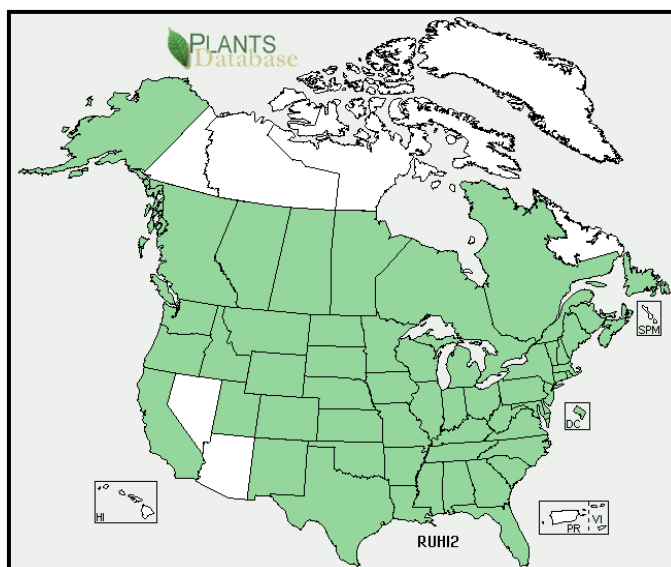
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial, Biennial, Annual
- Forb
- Dark green foliage
- 1 - 3 feet tall
- Produces a basal rosette the first year and flower stalk the second year
- Seed heads are brown with yellow petals
- Leaves and stems are covered with stiff short hairs
- Small seed



Distribution

Black eyed susan is found throughout the United States. The plant grows on fine to medium textured soils of medium fertility, but prefers sandy, well drained sites. This species is common on drier plains and prairies. It is not shade tolerant.



Key Characteristics

- Lower leaves are oblong, broad, thick and coarsely toothed
- Bright yellow flower, 2 -3 inches in diameter, with dark “disk” or center
- Flowers May - Oct
- Produces a basal rosette the first year of growth
- Stems are densely haired
- Alternate leaf arrangement on stem



Uses

- Native Landscaping
- Wildlife Habitat
- Roadside Beautification
- Ground Cover

Comments

Black eyed susan is one of the most common wildflowers in the United States, and is listed as invasive in some areas. It can be seen along roadsides nation wide during the summer, and is a common invader of over grazed pastures. It has low palatability, and can become a nuisance in some situations. Black eyed susan can be controlled with herbicide and good grazing management techniques. Birds may feed on the seed. It makes an excellent wildflower for native landscaping, and is attractive to many species of insects. It may also be used as a forb in grass mixes for erosion control. This plant may be an annual, perennial, or biennial depending upon the severity of the climate. Black eyed susan is susceptible to powdery mildew and damping off disease. Commercial seed/plants are commonly available. The Cherokee Indians treated earaches with a juice extracted from the plant.

Catclaw Sensitive Briar

Mimosa nuttallii (D.C. ex Britton & Rose) B.L. Turner

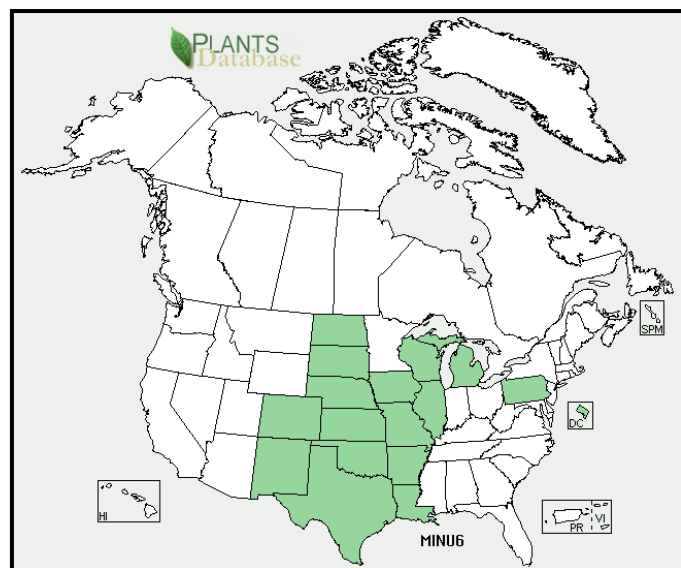
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Legume
- Pink to lavender flowers
- 1 to 2 feet tall
- Member of the bean family and produces seed in bean like pods
- Small thorns along the stem
- Vine like



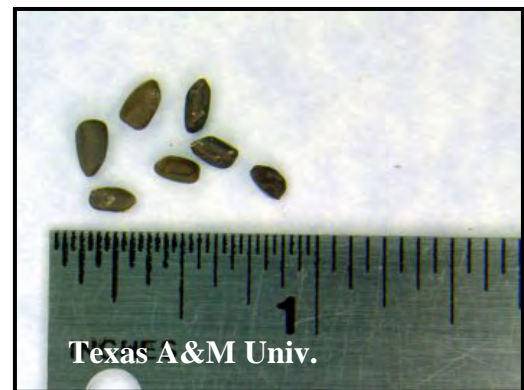
Distribution

Catclaw sensitive briar is found throughout the Great Plains and Midwest of the United States. The plant favors prairies, open woodlands, and roadsides with dry, rocky, or sandy soils.



Key Characteristics

- Sprawling stems 1 to 6 feet in length covered with small thorns
- Alternate, bi-pinnately compound leaves
- Pink to lavender, puffball, flowers
- Seedpods are 1 to 5 inches long with dense hair
- Dry, rocky, or sandy soils
- Leaves are sensitive to touch
- Flowers May - September



Uses

- Livestock grazing
- Native landscaping

Comments

Catclaw sensitive briar is a low growing, vine like, native legume. It is readily eaten by livestock, wildlife, and birds utilize its seeds. This plant is a fair range indicator and decreases when overgrazed. The leaflets are sensitive to touch and fold together when disturbed. This plant looks very similar to herbaceous mimosa. The thorns on the stems are an easy way to distinguish between the two. It makes attractive ground cover with its pink, puffball flowers, and being a legume, adds nitrogen to the soil. The thorns cause little to no problems due to their inconspicuous size. Members of this genus are considered important food source for the endangered gopher tortoise.

Common Ragweed

Ambrosia artemisiifolia (L.)

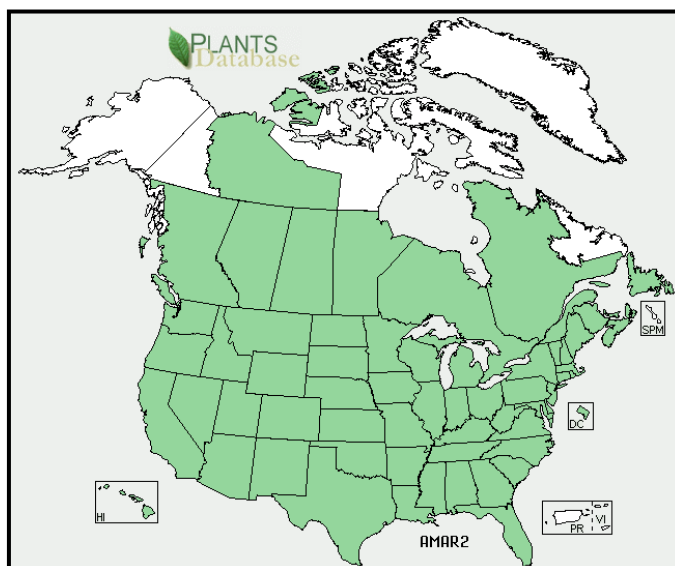
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Annual
- Forb
- Noxious weed in some portions of its range
- Fern like leaf
- 1-3 feet tall, may reach up to 9 feet in height in optimum conditions
- Opposite leaves
- Flowers are small
- Seeds are horned
- Fine hair on both sides of leaves
- Hairy stem



Distribution

Common ragweed is found throughout the United States and Canada. Its wide distribution is indicative to its adaptability. It will tolerate a wide array of soil and climatic conditions. It is common in the plains and in open fields. It can be found almost anywhere the soil has been disturbed and sun light reaches the ground



Key Characteristics

- Deeply lobed, fern like leaf
- Seed appears to have small horns
- Hair on both surfaces of leaves and stem
- Deep green foliage
- Stem may be wine colored
- Produces copious amounts of pollen, looks like yellow smoke
- Flowers June-December



Uses

- Wildlife
- Ground Cover

Comments

Annual, or common, ragweed is listed as a noxious weed in some portions of its range. It is commonly seen in disturbed areas or in over grazed pastures. It is thought to be the number one source of “Hay Fever” in persons with allergies. Though considered a weed, it is an important browse species for whitetail deer, and many birds feed upon its seed. Birds also aid in the dispersal of seed, which may lay dormant for long periods of time in the soil. The dormancy of the seed makes this plant especially difficult to control or eliminate from areas it is not desired.

Herbaceous Mimosa

Mimosa strigillosa Torr. & A. Gray

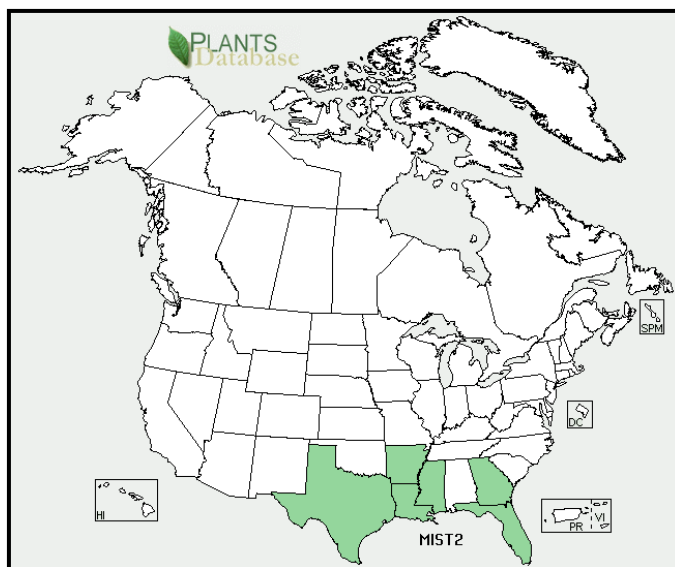
Description

- AKA: Powderpuff
- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Legume
- Bi-pinnately compound leaves
- Pink blooms
- 6 to 8 inches tall
- Vine like growth form
- Stoloniferous
- Reproduces by seed and runners



Distribution

Herbaceous mimosa is found throughout the southeastern United States. It grows well in full sun. This plant is widely adaptable and tolerates sandy to clay soils on well drained to poorly drained sites. Studies indicate herbaceous mimosa will germinate at pH of 4.5. However, the plant performs best when pH is 6.0 to 8.0.



Key Characteristics

- 6 - 8 inches tall
- Stolonerous
- Distinct, pink, puffball, bloom
- Sensitive to touch
- Thornless
- Short seed pods with fine hair
- Vine like
- Alternate leaf arrangement
- Flowers June – November



Uses

- Wildlife Habitat
- Native Landscaping
- Ground Cover

Comments

Herbaceous mimosa provides ground cover by rapidly spreading out with runners, or stolons, that root down and via seed. It also improves the soil by fixing nitrogen. Whitetail deer and cattle will graze it occasionally, and several bird species, including bobwhite, utilize the seed. Members of this genus are an important food source for the endangered gopher tortoise. It is attractive to insects which provide forage for birds as well. This plant, once established, is drought tolerant and requires little maintenance. Healthy plants produce a thick layer of foliage which reduces weed competition and reduces evaporation. Seed needs to be mechanically or chemically scarified before planting to insure good stands. Seed is commercially available. 'Crockett' was released through the East Texas Plant Material Center.

Illinois Bundleflower

Desmanthus illinoensis

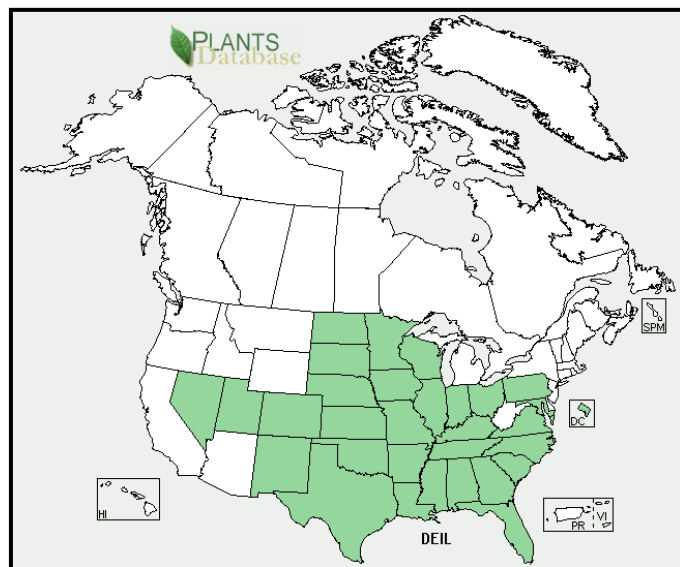
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Legume
- 2-5 feet in height
- Fern like, double compound leaves
- Alternate leaf arrangement
- Multiple stems
- White, puffball flowers
- Coiled bean pod



Distribution

Illinois bundleflower can be found throughout the eastern half of the United States. It is commonly associated with the plains and prairies of the central U.S. This species is tolerant of a wide range of soils, and can often be found in disturbed areas.



Key Characteristics

- Bi-pinnately compound leaves
- White “puffball” flower
- “Whirl” of bean pods
- Alternate leaf arrangement
- Leaves are sensitive to touch
- Flowers May-July



Uses

- Restoration
- Wildlife Habitat
- Native Landscaping / Xeriscaping

Comments

Illinois bundleflower is considered to be one of our most important native legumes, and its presence indicates excellent range conditions. Though it is typically associated with moist areas, its deep tap root makes it drought tolerant. It is relished by livestock, and has been grazed out of many areas of its home range. It is browsed heavily by whitetailed deer, and has protein levels comparable to domestic legumes. Though it is a perennial, it produces prolific amounts of viable seed. This seed is eaten by several species of birds, including quail, and is also being researched as a potential crop for human consumption. Seed is commercially available, and released varieties include: ‘Sabine’ (Tx) and Reno Germplasm, a tested class release from Kansas.

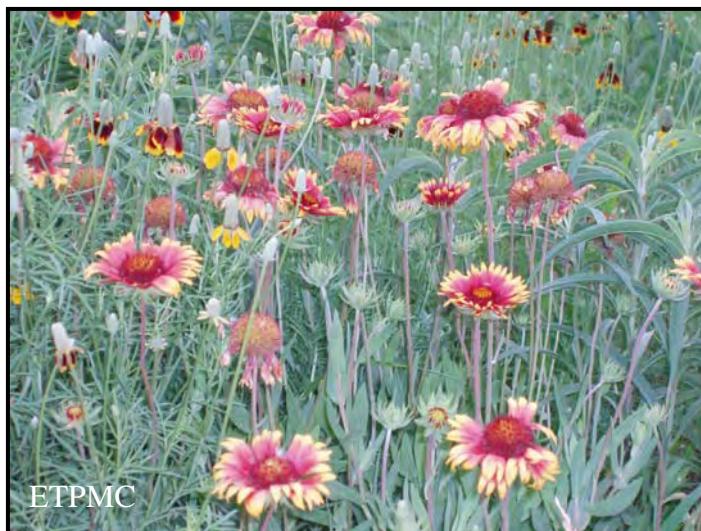


Indian Blanket Flower

Gaillardia pulchella Foug.

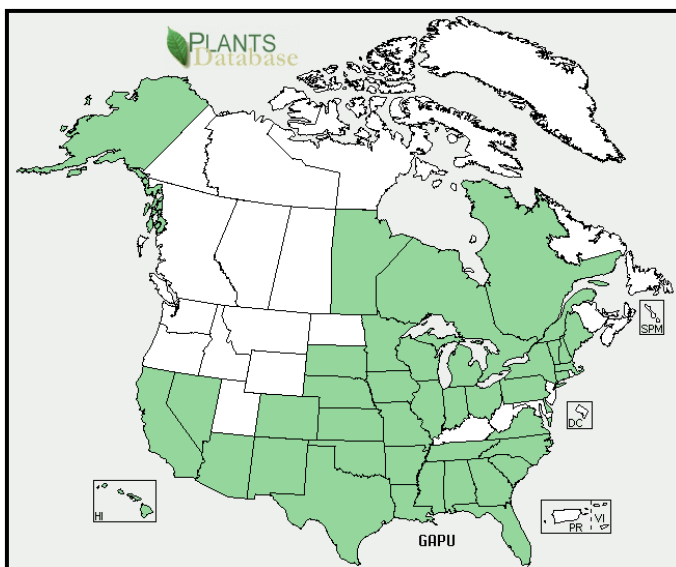
Description

- AKA: Fire Wheel and Blanket Flower
- Native
- Warm Season
- Annual, Biennial, Perennial
- Forb
- Bright, orange, red, and yellow flower
- 4 – 24 inches in height
- Hairy stems
- Fuzzy seed head
- Wide distribution



Distribution

Gaillardia has an extremely wide distribution. Members of this genus can be found throughout Canada and The United States. This wide distribution is testament to its adaptability to a wide range of soil types and climactic conditions. The species *G. pulchella* Foug. is one of the more common members of this genus. It can be found along roadsides and ditches throughout much of the United States and portions of Canada. It prefers sandy soil, and is common in areas that have been disturbed



Key Characteristics

- Bright, yellow, orange, and red flowers
- Flowers May – September
- Fuzzy seed head
- Hairy stem and around flower
- Lanceolate shaped leaf
- Alternate leaf arrangement
- Seed has fuzzy awns



Uses

- Roadside Beautification
- Wildlife
- Restoration
- Native Landscaping / Xeriscaping



Comments

This common wildflower is the state flower of Oklahoma, and can be used along roadsides since its low height does not obstruct motorists' view. It makes an attractive plant for native landscaping, and is fairly drought tolerant; making it an excellent choice for Xeriscaping. It attracts insects which in turn provide forage for game birds. This wildflower has moderate palatability to livestock and browse animals. It is readily established from seed, spreads rapidly, and has good seedling vigor. Commercial seed is available. This plant may be a perennial, biennial, or annual depending upon its location, and the severity of the climate. Native Americans believed this plant brought good luck.

Marestail

Conyza canadensis (L.) Cronq.

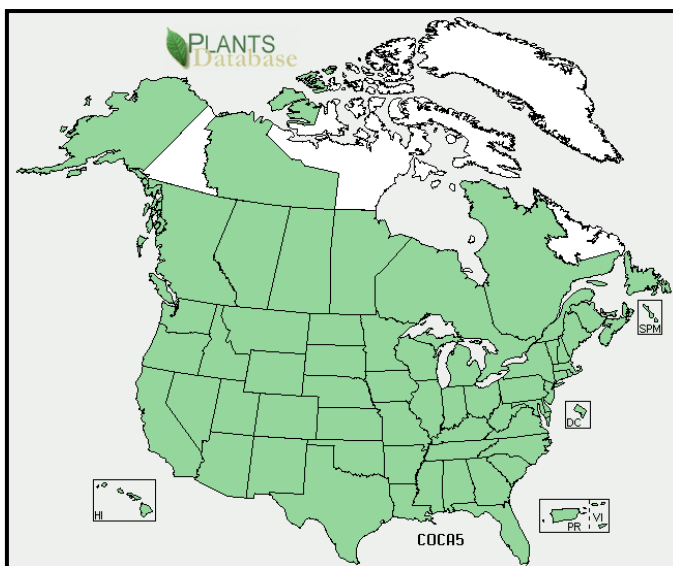
Description

- AKA: Horseweed
- Native
- Warm or cool season depending upon location
- Annual, biennial
- 4 to 6 feet tall
- Starts growth as a basal rosette
- Pink to white flowers
- Spreads via wind dispersed seed
- Single stem
- Column like, but may become bushy as plant puts on seed



Distribution

Marestail is found throughout the United States and Canada. This plant is considered invasive in many areas. It is adapted to a wide range of soils and climatic conditions, but prefers dry disturbed land. Marestail is intolerant of shade and is usually found in landscape beds, fence rows, and unmowed areas.



Key Characteristics

- One upright stem, covered in fine hairs
- Leaves are spirally arranged
- Has a taproot
- Numerous, small pink to white flowers
- Seeds have silky tufts
- Flowers June – November



Uses

No known uses

Comments

Mareostachys dielsii is listed as invasive in several states. One plant can produce up to 50,000 windborne seeds that can travel up to ¼ mile in a 10 mph wind. Glyphosate resistance has been identified in Arkansas and some Midwestern states. Mareostachys dielsii has little value as forage or browse and its use by livestock indicates very poor range conditions.

Maximilian Sunflower

Helianthus maximiliani Schrad.

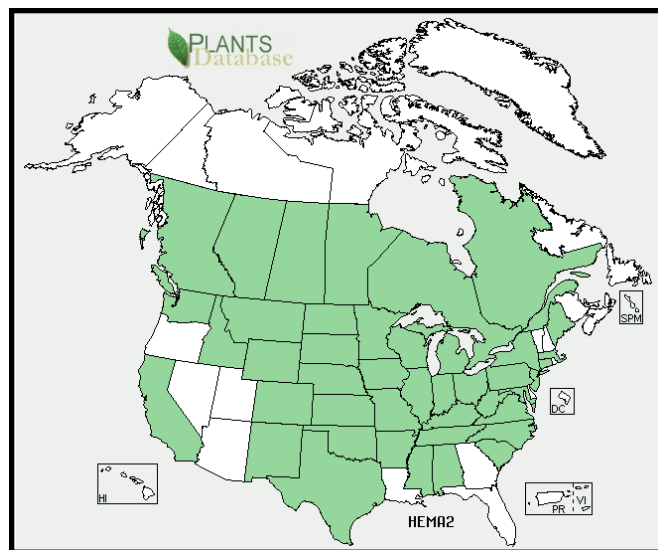
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Forb
- Grayish green stems and foliage
- 3 to 7 feet tall
- Prominent yellow flowers 2 to 3 inches across
- Leaves are long, narrow and taper at the ends
- Coarse texture



Distribution

Maximilian sunflower is found throughout the Plains and eastward in the United States and is associated with bluestem grasses. It grows in areas of greater than 25 inches of rainfall/year and is common on heavier soils. Maximilian sunflower prefers well drained soils and sunny sites. One commercial variety, 'Prairie Gold', is adapted to as little as 14 inches of rainfall/year.



Key Characteristics

- The flower stalks grow in a cluster from a common rhizome
- 4 - 6 inch, narrow 'V' shaped leaves tapered at both ends
- The top of the leaves are rough and curve downward
- Yellow flowers up and down the stalks
- Flowers July – November
- Short, dense, coarse hairs on stem



Uses

- Wildlife Habitat
- Restoration
- Buffer Strips
- Forage
- Native Landscaping

Comments

Maximilian sunflower is a very useful native forb. Though low in protein, it is highly palatable to livestock and wildlife and remains green well into the fall. It produces a very large seed crop which is utilized by many bird species and small mammals. It produces numerous, bright, yellow flowers which make attractive native landscaping. It is also attractive to insects which in turn provide bonus forage for turkey and quail. It is an important component of the prairie region, and has been used successfully in buffer strips and restoration plantings. American Indians used this plant as a source of oils, food, dye, and thread. Commercial seed is readily available. Released varieties include: 'Aztec' (TX) and 'Prairie Gold' (KS) for conservation use. 'Aztec' was released for the purposes of wildlife food, livestock forage cover, natural hedges, screens, filterstrips, and as ornamental landscape plants. 'Prairie Gold' was released for critical area reseeding and wildlife food plantings.

Narrow-Leaf Mountain Mint

Pycnanthemum tenuifolium Schrad.

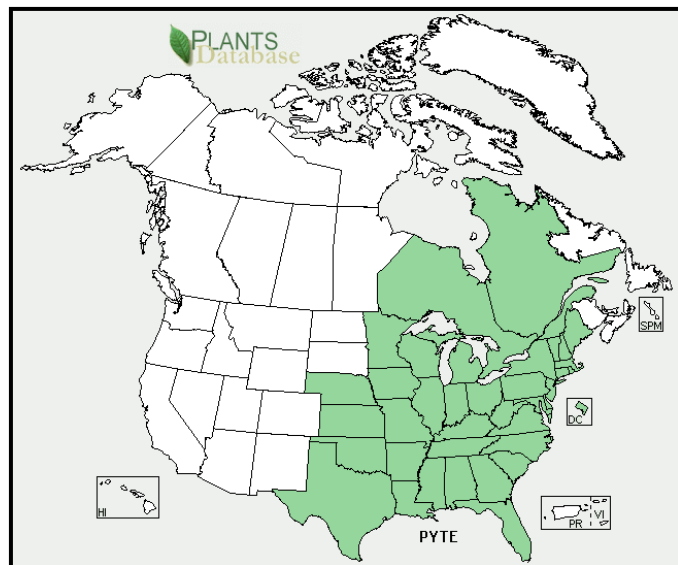
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Forb
- 2 - 4 feet tall
- Tiny white flowers arranged in clusters
- Woody stem
- Very narrow leaves
- Strong mint smell when bruised



Distribution

Narrow-leaf mountain mint is found throughout the eastern half of the United States and eastern 1/3rd of Canada. It is often found in disturbed sites, road side ditches, right-of-ways, and forest openings. It is typically associated with wet sites in its southern range, but it will tolerate a wide range of soil types and drainage regimes. It can grow in either full sun or partial shade.



Key Characteristics

- Strongly aromatic when bruised or crushed, mint smell
- Very narrow leaves
- Opposite leaf and stem arrangement
- Square stem
- Small white flowers
- Flowers June – September
- Succulent, bright green foliage



Uses

- Restoration
- Wildlife Habitat
- Native Landscaping / Xeriscaping

Comments

Narrow-leaf mountain mint is a showy plant when in bloom, and has a very pleasing, mint fragrance when crushed or bruised. This aroma is easy to detect if the plant is brushed against or walked through. It makes an interesting plant for native landscaping with its white blooms and aromatic fragrance. It provides cover and browse for wildlife. It also provides habitat for insects that game bird forage upon. Native Americans were said to use this plant to treat headaches and fevers.

Showy Evening Primrose

Oenothera speciosa Nutt.

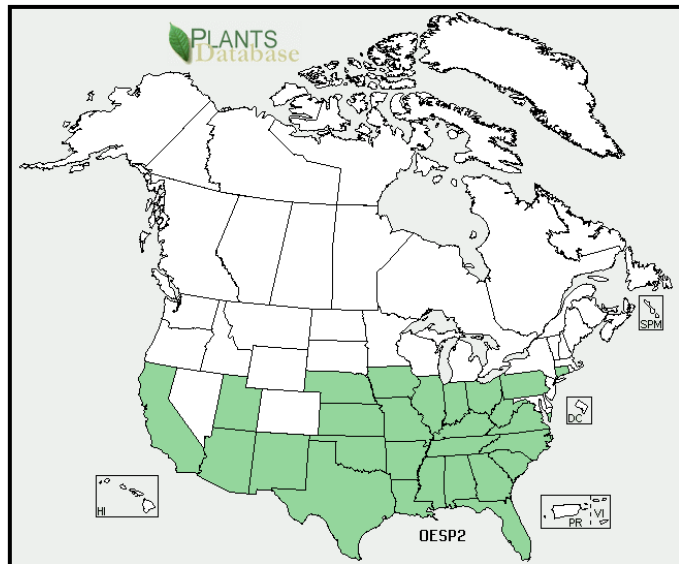
Description

- AKA: Pink Ladies
- Native
- Warm season
- Perennial
- Forb
- White or pink flowers
- Bright yellow centers
- 4 to 20 inches tall
- Erect or sprawling stems
- Spreads by seed



Distribution

Showy evening primrose is distributed across most of the southern half of the United States. It is a common wildflower seen along roadsides, and is very drought tolerant. It favors clay or loamy soils, but is tolerant of a wide range of environmental conditions



Key Characteristics

- 4 to 20 inches tall
- Densely haired stems
- Leaves are about 1 inch wide with lobed margins
- Flowers have 4 petals
- White or pink flowers with yellow centers
- Seeds are produced in hairy capsules about 1/2 inch long
- Seeds are small and brown
- Flowers April - August



Uses

- Roadside Beautification
- Native Landscaping / Xeriscaping
- Wildlife
- Ground Cover

Comments

This common, low growing wildflower can be seen along roadsides and field margins. Its flowers are very attractive, making this an excellent plant for native landscaping. It is also drought tolerant which make it a candidate for Xeriscaping. The blooms are attractive to many species of insects, which provide bonus forage for game birds such as turkey and quail. The seeds are used heavily by many species of birds including doves, bobwhites, and turkeys. The foliage is occasionally browsed by white-tailed deer and turkey, but is only considered moderately desirable at best. This plant makes good ground cover, but it should be noted that several members of this genus are considered invasive and weedy.

Soft Rush

Juncus effuses L.

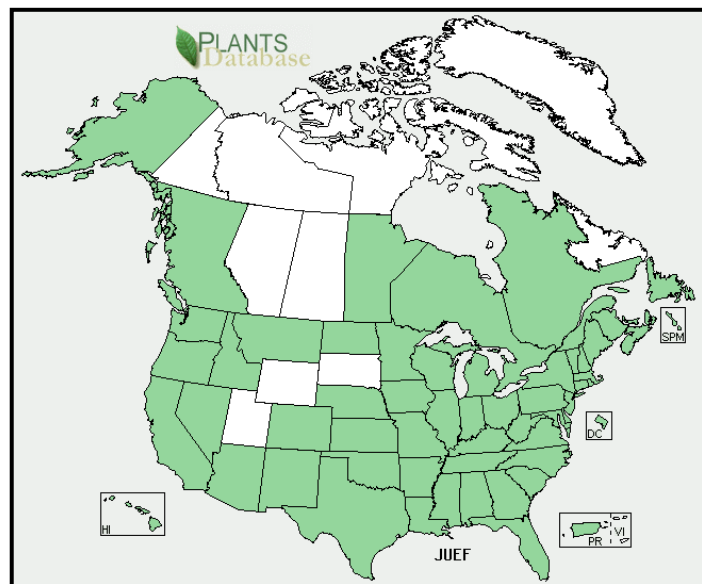
Description

- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Rhizomatous
- 2 - 5 feet tall
- Grass like forb
- Forms clumps



Distribution

Soft rush is a very common plant associated with brackish and freshwater wetlands. It is widely distributed throughout the United States and Canada, and is present as far north as Alaska. It prefers full sun in slightly acidic, finely textured soils. It is absent at high altitude and in dry climates.



Key Characteristics

- Dark green, spike like stem
- Bends easily
- Slow spreading, forms clumps
- Rhizomatous
- Stem filled with Styrofoam like pith
- Associated with wetlands and low areas
- Seeds form in a cluster on the upper 2/3rds of the stem
- Flowers March – September



Uses

- Erosion Control
- Wildlife Habitat
- Buffer Strips

Comments

Soft stem rush is a very common wetland plant. It makes an excellent shoreline protector, slowing wave energies with its multitude of densely packed stems. It is also capable of taking up nutrients and metals, and can be a useful tool for polishing run off water before it enters sensitive areas. Many species of animals feed on its stems, rhizomes, and seeds. The seeds may lay dormant in the soil for more than 60 years. This plant is often an increaser in pastures, where it is present; due to cattle preferentially graze more palatable grasses. Cattle will use soft stem rush if more palatable plants are unavailable, and protein levels are moderate. This plant was used by many tribes of Native Americans to make baskets and woven products. It also served as a food source for some tribes that utilized young shoots and seed. Sumter Germplasm soft rush was released as a source identified material by the Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center (GA) in 2008.

Ticktrefoil

Desmodium species

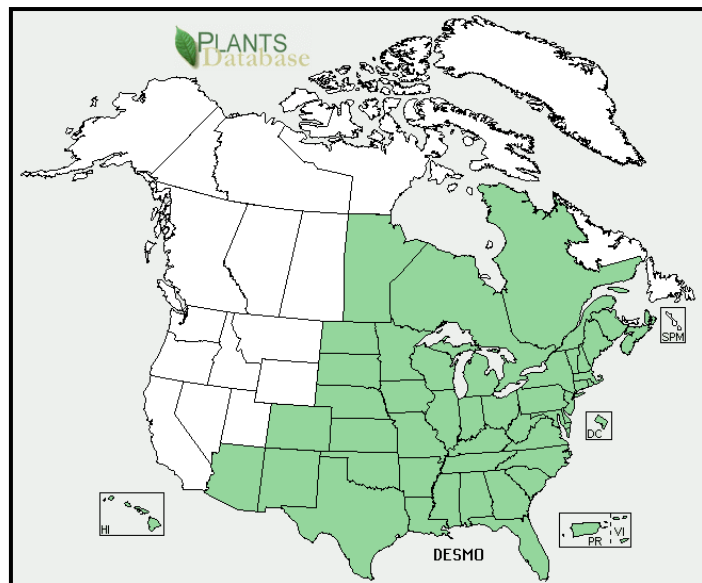
Description

- AKA: stick tights and beggar's lice
- Native
- Warm Season
- Perennial
- Legume
- Tri-foliolate leaf arrangement
- Most have a showy, purple flower
- Seed enclosed in a Velcro like pod
- Deep Rooted
- 2-4 feet tall



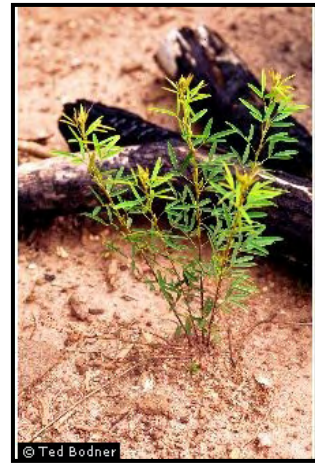
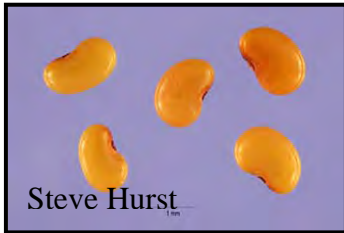
Distribution

Desmodium species can be found throughout most of the eastern 2/3rds of the United States and Canada. They can be found in prairie regions and woodlands. They prefer loamy soils, but will tolerate a wide range of soil and climatic conditions. They are commonly found in openings in woodlands, in timber cuts, forest edges, and field margins.



Key Characteristics

- Tri-foliolate leaf arrangement like clovers
- Actual leaf shape dependant upon species
- Most have showy, purple, pea like flower
- Flower color may be pale pink to white, or yellow in some species
- Seed incased in a “Velcro” like pod that sticks to clothing and fur
- Flowers July – October



Uses

- Restoration
- Wildlife Habitat
- Native Landscaping / Xeriscaping
- Nitrogen Fixation / Cover Crop



Comments

Desmodiums are very important native legumes. Their presences indicate good range conditions. They are considered decreasers, and can be grazed out of areas if not carefully managed. They are high in protein and are very nutritious to all classes of livestock, though they are usually not abundant enough to be considered significant livestock forage. They are considered to be one of the best native plants for wildlife, from quail to deer. Their flowers are quite showing, making excellent native landscaping. This genus is very diverse, but the “stick tight” seed pods and trifoliate leaves are common features associated with species in this genus. These plants may be over looked, when not in flower, until the seed pods are noticed stuck to clothing.

Woolly Croton

Croton capitatus Michx.

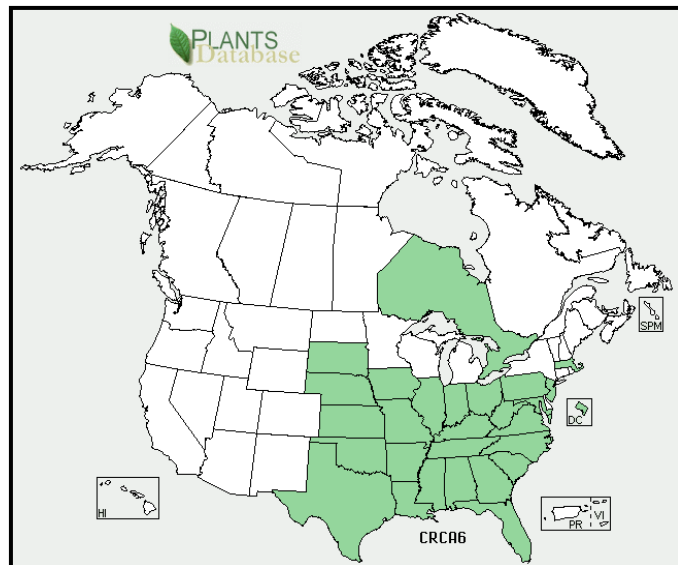
Description

- AKA: Goat Weed or Dove Weed
- Native
- Warm season
- Annual
- Member of the Spurge family
- Grayish-green color
- Flowers are clustered together, not distinct
- 2 to 3 feet tall, may reach 6 feet
- Plant is densely covered in fuzzy hairs



Distribution

Woolly croton is found from the Great Plains east all the way to New York State. It is commonly found on dry prairies, overgrazed pastures, rocky hills, and open woodlands. This plant prefers sandy or limestone soils with lower fertility. Woolly croton grows sparingly on ranges or pastures that are properly grazed. It is a pioneer species on disturbed soils.



Key Characteristics

- The upper half to one third of plant is branched
- Young plants are thickly covered with brownish or gray hairs
- Leaves are 1 to 4 inches long, ¼ to ¾ inch wide and hairy
- Flowers are cream colored clusters
- Seeds are enclosed in a woolly capsule. Usually 3 seeds/capsule
- Sandy or limestone soils
- Degraded or disturbed areas
- Crushed leaves are aromatic
- “Velvet” like feel due to dense hairs
- Flowers July - October



Uses

- Wildlife habitat

Comments

Woolly croton is toxic to livestock. The toxic substance is croton oil which induces scours or diarrhea. Cattle normally avoid grazing this plant. It is a nuisance in hay pastures and hay bales. Members of the Croton genus are listed as invasive in some states. It is not a desired plant in agricultural or livestock areas, but it does provide ground cover, and is an important food source for a variety of birds. Dove, quail, and turkey are especially fond of the seed from this plant.

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A field of tall, thin-stemmed flowers with red and yellow petals and brown centers, growing in a green field. The flowers are arranged in a dense, upright cluster. The petals are a vibrant red with a yellow border. The centers are a dark brown, textured cone. The stems are thin and green, with small, narrow leaves. The background is a soft-focus green field.

Common Forbs