

NRCS Species for Plant Collections 2009

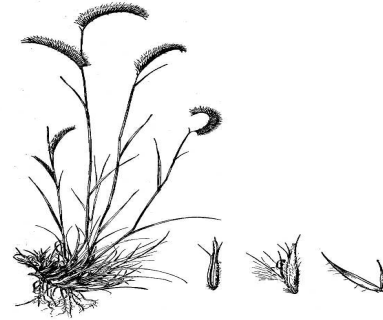
Bouteloua gracilis

Scientific Name: *Bouteloua gracilis* (Willd. ex Kunth) Lag. ex Griffiths

Common Name: blue grama



Steve Hurst. Provided by [ARS Systematic Botany and Mycology Laboratory](#), United States, AZ.



Hitchcock, A.S. (rev. A. Chase). 1950. *Manual of the grasses of the United States*. USDA Miscellaneous Publication No. 200. Washington, DC. 1950.

Morphological Characteristics:

- native, perennial
- warm season grass
- found on the dry slopes, plains, prairies, and foothills of most western states
- bunchgrass, but sometimes having short rhizomes
- plant height 6-24 inches
- leaf blade thin, flat or infolded, .5-2 mm broad
- foliage color is usually gray-green
- flower color is yellow
- seed heads have 1-3 primary unilateral or comb-like branches 1.5 to 3.5 cm long, branches have 40-130 tightly packed spikelets 4-7 mm long, lemma is pubescent at base
- the flower clusters are initially straight, silvery, green-magenta in color, but eventually dry to a pale blond color and curve into eyebrow-like shapes
- adapted to a wide variety of soil types
- begins growth in early summer and matures in about 2 months

Conservation Use:

Why collect this plant? The James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center has identified this plant as having potential benefits to the following conservation practice standards: 645 Upland Wildlife Habitat Management; 342 Critical Area Planting; 562 Recreation Area Improvement; 550 Range Planting; 512 Pasture And Hay Planting; 327 Conservation Cover. The planting of blue grama can provide excellent food and cover benefits for wildlife and livestock as well as help conserve our soil. In Texas there is a need for locally adapted native (ecotypic) plant materials for use in revegetation projects. Your assistance in collecting this plant helps supports this effort and the NRCS conservation practice standards which are employed daily to conserve the natural resources of Texas!

How to Collect Seed:

1. Identify native plant stands in your area. You can go to the following websites for helpful photos <http://plants.usda.gov> or <http://www.noble.org/imagegallery/index.html> or www.wildflower.org
2. Determine if seed is mature. Mature seed is typically dry and will easily separate from the seed head.
3. Hand strip mature seed by grasping the bottom of the seed head then gently pulling away from the base of the plant. Deposit seed in a brown paper sack. Collect seed from a minimum of 30 to 50 plants.
4. Label each collection as it is made so collections do not get mixed up. Information required includes: Collector's name, number of plants collected, location (parish, city, highway, and GPS coordinates), site description (soil type, slope, and plants growing in association).
5. Complete NRCS-ECS-580; Plant Collection Information Form and mail with collected seeds to the NRCS Plant Materials Center requesting the species.

Knox City Plant Materials Center
3776 FM 1292
Knox City, TX 79529-2514

Helpful Tips:

Look for superior plants that display differences in color, height, or forage abundance and record observations. Differences in growing site or location should be made into separate collections if they are separated by more than 1 mile between sites.

Other Photos:



Clint Rollins, USDA-NRCS, Texas

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