

Uses

The anticipated uses of 'Augusta' orchardgrass are: cool season forage for pasture and hay, cool season grass component in cool season grass and legume mixtures for wildlife habitat, and critical area stabilization on areas where seed mixtures are used or succession to woody species is desired. Its extensive fibrous root system is an excellent adaptation for drought tolerance. Its open growth habit allows establishment with legumes and forbs and allows succession to occur.

Status

Caution: This plant may become invasive.

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

Dactylis glomerata L., orchardgrass, is a persistent, cool season bunchgrass. Under dry land conditions, it usually develops distinct clumps and flower culms 15 to 18 inches tall. Leaves are usually less than 12 inches in height. When grown under irrigation or in more moist situations, it attains a much larger stature and grows together in a close stand. No vegetative spread has been observed. Orchardgrass is one of the earliest species to grow in the spring, making tremendous growth during cool conditions.

For more about *Dactylis glomerata* and other plants and the Appalachian Plant Materials Center visit :

The PLANTS Web site
<http://plants.usda.gov/>

The Plant Materials Program Web site
<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/>

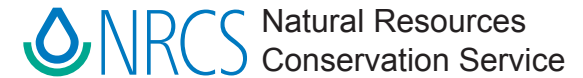
**Appalachian Plant
Materials Center
Old Prison Farm Road
P. O. Box 390
Alderson, WV 24910
Tel. 304-445-3005
Fax. 304-445-7049
<http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/wvpmc.html>**

Cover Photo Credit:
Robert H. Mohlenbrock
USDA NRCS 1995
Northeast Wetland Flora
@ USDA NRCS PLANTS

Inside photo credit
Steve Hurst @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS database

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (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 to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

United States Department of Agriculture



'Augusta' Orchardgrass *Dactylis glomerata*



Dactylis glomerata L., orchardgrass, is a persistent, cool season bunchgrass. Orchardgrass performs well on different textured soils ranging from clay to gravelly loams and on shallow to deep soils

**Appalachian Plant Materials Center products are
Helping People Help the Land**

through better plants and science.

‘Augusta’ Orchardgrass

Due to deep roots it also is capable of strong summer growth when conditions are favorable.

Orchardgrass has about 487,000 seeds per pound.



Adaptation and Distribution

Orchardgrass is found from Maine to the Gulf Coast states and from the Atlantic Coast to the eastern Great Plains. It is common throughout the Appalachian Mountains and is especially well-adapted to Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. In the Northeast, orchardgrass is adapted to somewhat poorly drained to well-drained soils.

Orchardgrass performs well on different textured soils ranging from clay to gravelly loams and on shallow to deep soils. It does not grow well in saline soils and areas with high water tables. It has the ability to establish and persist in areas that receive as little as 11 inches of annual precipitation.

Orchardgrass performs best in a pH range of 5.8 – 7.0.

For a current distribution map, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Website.

Establishment

A clean, firm, weed-free seedbed is recommended. Pasture and hayland seedings should be made in the late fall or very early spring. Do not seed after the spring moisture period is well advanced or a failure may occur because of drought and hot summer conditions before the grass is well established. A no-till drill with press wheels may be used; orchardgrass is easily established with common agricultural drills in the Northeast. For pasture and hayland a seeding rate of eight to ten pounds per acre is recommended. If broadcast, double the seeding rate. Adjustments in seeding rate should be made when seeding in mixtures. Seeding depth should not be more than 1/2 inch. When seeding for seed increase, planting should be in 28 to 40 inch rows. Seed at four to six pounds per acre. Seed matures evenly and is ready for harvest in mid-August. When direct combining the seed should be dried before storing.

Under dry land conditions the planting should not be grazed until late summer or fall of the second growing season. The plants may be severely damaged by overgrazing especially in the seedling year. Use no more than 60% of the annual growth during the winter season or 50% during the growing season. This plant responds well to a rotation-deferred grazing system. Periodically the grass should be allowed to mature and produce seed for continuation of the stand.

Orchardgrass responds to good fertility management. One strategy to even out the forage production is to fertilize the stand after the first and second cutting or grazing to boost late spring and summer production. Apply fertilizer based upon regular soil tests.

Pests and Potential Problems

Brown stripe, scald, rust and leaf spot are the most prevalent and destructive disease in orchardgrass. Resistance to these varies among cultivars. Japanese and green June beetle larvae feed on orchardgrass roots; sawflies feed on their tops. Little is known, however, about the economic loss caused by these insects.

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

The cultivar ‘Augusta’ was released by the Appalachian Plant Materials Center in 2008. ‘Augusta’ orchardgrass was collected in Augusta County, Virginia from a naturalized stand growing on a Sequoia-Berks soil; a well-drained, shallow, low fertility, acid soil with medium to low water holding capacity that occurs on hillsides and ridgetops. Foundation seed is available to commercial seed producers to establish certified production fields from the Appalachian Plant Materials Center in Alderson, West Virginia.

Control

Please contact your local agricultural extension specialist or county weed specialist to learn what works best in your area and how to use it safely. Always read label and safety instructions for each control method. Trade names and control measures appear in this document only to provide specific information. USDA, NRCS does not guarantee or warranty the products and control methods named, and other products may be equally effective.