

'Pastura' little bluestem

Schizachyrium scoparium
(Michx.) Nash



'Pastura' little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)

'Pastura' little bluestem was released in 1964 by the New Mexico State University's Los Lunas Agricultural Science Center and the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center in Los Lunas, New Mexico.

Description

'Pastura' little bluestem is a warm-season, long-lived, perennial, native grass having good seed and forage production, and good seedling vigor.

'Pastura' is a bunchgrass of medium height having uniform size, growth habit, and color. It is of the green type in contrast to the bluish-green type commonly found further east. Plants are erect, non-lodging at maturity, with dense, basal leaf growth averaging 12 inches in height; culms average 24 inches. Little bluestem is a cross-pollinated species.

Source

The original seed was collected in 1957 between Glorieta and Rowe, New Mexico. It was under evaluation until its release in 1964.

Conservation Uses

For this species, 'Pastura' little bluestem produces an average amount of high-quality forage. This variety has a uniform appearance, with good basal leaf growth of a greater density than other strains tested.

Area of Adaptation and Use

'Pastura' is well-suited for range plantings on light-textured soils of the foothills and plains in central and eastern New Mexico and eastern Colorado. In these areas, it has produced more seed and forage than native collections originating further east. 'Pastura' is well adapted to adverse climatic conditions, particularly extremes in temperature and precipitation.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Keep the established fields free of weeds by using the recommended herbicide(s) for this species.

Ecological Considerations

'Pastura' little bluestem does not appear to have insect problems in either range plantings or seed production plantings.

Seed and Plant Production

Under irrigation, 'Pastura' little bluestem grows well on light- to medium-textured soil. Plant in late spring to early summer after the soil has warmed.

For ease of cultivation and irrigation, plant in rows with a spacing of approximately 3 feet (spacing may be adjusted to fit conventional equipment). Plant seed about ½ inch deep with rows in beds or beside shallow furrows so that the seedbed can be irrigated without getting water directly on the row before the seedlings have emerged and begun to grow.

Apply 80 to 100 lbs. nitrogen on established stands at the time of the first irrigation. A color change in the seed heads and early seed shattering indicate the time to harvest seed. The seed heads and, consequently, the whole field becomes a uniformly brownish color.

Use an all-crop type of combine to harvest seed; cut the air flow to a minimum; operate the cylinder at high speed. Spread and dry the harvested material to avoid heating.

Availability

Foundation seed is produced by the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center. Foundation seed is available to certified growers through New Mexico State Seed Certification.

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

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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 cooperative release between New Mexico State University's Los Lunas Agricultural Science and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service's Los Lunas Plant Materials Center.

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