

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

'Niner' sideoats grama

Bouteloua cutipendula (Michx.)
Torr. var. *caespitosa*
Gould & Kapadia



'Niner' sideoats grama (*Bouteloua cutipendula*)

Description

'Niner' sideoats grama (*Bouteloua cutipendula*) (Michx.) Torr. var. *caespitosa* is a tall (0.5-1 m), long-lived, perennial bunchgrass that is extremely drought and fire tolerant. The culms of flowering stems have up to 50 short pendant branches with each having two to seven spikelets. These inflorescence branches are alternately opposite from each other. With maturity, they fold together appearing to be derived from one side, hence the common name of sideoats. The leaves are mostly basal, bluish in color in spring and fading to yellowish in color in winter. The botanical variety *caespitosa* varies from the typical variety because of the absence of creeping rhizomes.

Source

'Niner' sideoats grama was originally collected in 1957 6.4 km (4 miles) west of Socorro, New Mexico. The collection site's elevation is 1,432 m (4,700 ft.), and receives 22.9 cm (9 inches) of annual precipitation. 'Niner' was found growing in association with blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), black grama (*Bouteloua eriopoda*), bush muhly (*Muhlenbergia porter*), plains bristlegrass (*Setaria leucopilia*), green sprangletop (*Leptochloa*

dubia), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), 'James' galleta (*Hilaria jamesii*), Halls panicum (*Panicum hallii*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), and littleleaf sumac (*Rhusmi crophulla*).

Conservation Uses

'Niner' sideoats grama produces abundant forage on many range sites. It provides moderate- to high-quality forage for all types of grazing livestock. It is fair forage for wildlife, and it provides good nesting cover for upland game birds and escape cover for all wildlife.

Area of Adaptation and Use

'Niner' sideoats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula* var. *caespitosa*) is found from Nebraska to Texas and west to California. In the Southwest, it is one of the most important species because of its high palatability and vigorous growth.

In New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Texas, Utah, and Oklahoma, 'Niner' sideoats grama is adapted up to elevations of 8,200 ft. and in lower precipitation areas.

'Niner' sideoats grama is recommended for a wide range of soils and climatic conditions, but it performs better on medium- to heavy-textured soils.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Prepare a clean, weed-free seedbed well in advance of planting, either by tillage or herbicides. Prior to planting, the site should be firm and have accumulated soil moisture. The best time to plant is in the early-spring, late-summer, or early-autumn using a native grass drill with picker wheels, or a medium to large seed box to ensure a good planting of the seed. Broadcast seeding may be used in areas not easily planted with a drill, but some type of additional coverage such as culti-packing or light dragging will be beneficial to ensure good seed-to-soil contact. Plant seed to a depth of 1/8- to 1/4-inch. Do not plant too deep. If one plant per-square-foot becomes established in field plantings, the seeding is considered successful.

Do not allow grazing the first year after planting. After establishment, either continuous or rotational grazing can be allowed. A minimum stubble height of 6-inches should be maintained when under continuous grazing. Plants should be allowed to produce seed annually to ensure stand health.

Ecological Considerations

Thrips and rice stink bugs can limit seed production on seed production fields.

Seed and Plant Production

'Niner' seed matures evenly and is ready for harvest from September to October (in Los Lunas, NM), and can be harvested with or without swathing with a field combine.

Availability

Breeder seed is produced and maintained by the USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Center, Los Lunas, New Mexico. Foundation seed is available to certified growers through New Mexico State University Seed Certification.

For more information, contact:

Los Lunas Plant Materials Center

1036 Miller Road

Los Lunas, NM 87031

Tele: 505-865-4684

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

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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 National Database Website <<http://plants.usda.gov/>> or the Plant Materials Program Website <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/>>.



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

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