

BIG BLUESTEM

Andropogon gerardii



ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Native to most areas east of Rocky Mountains and primary species of Tall Grass Prairie of Midwest. Tall, long-lived, warm season, bunchy sod former. Grows 3 to 6' tall, reddish purple at maturity. Thick rhizomes, 3 to 6" long. Numerous long basal and stem leaves green to dark green, often tinged with purple. Inflorescence a 2 to 6 branched turkey foot-shaped raceme. Freely inbreeds with sand bluestem.

GROWTH HABITS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

Thrives on rich fertile silt and clay loam soils of lowlands, draws and ravines in overflow and sub-irrigated sites in the 20 to 30" ppt. the belt of central U.S. Moderate salinity tolerance.

Moderate fertility requirements. Tolerates short-term submergence but prefers good drainage. Good winter hardiness.

CULTURE

Drill seed at 1/4 – 3/4" deep on fine to moderately coarse soils to 1" in sands on prepacked seedbeds. Cover broadcast seed shallow. Plant 6 to 12 lbs. PLS per acre and 50 - 100% more seed on erosive sites or broadcasting. Seed in non-volunteering crop stubble for better stands on erosive sites. Seed hay seeding sometimes feasible. Can be sod transplanted on critical sites. Seed March, April in southern and April, May in northern Great Plains. Can be seeded in winter but may get erratic stands.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Used for pasture, hay, landscaping, prairie chicken cover and wildlife habitat. Used for warm season irrigated pasture and hay. Graze established stands moderately leaving at least 6" stubble in summer. Late spring burning will remove old herbage and make for more uniform new growth. Highly palatable from late spring until fall. Tends to increase with good management.

IMPROVED VARIETIES

- 'Pawnee' released from Nebraska.
- 'Kaw' released from Kansas.
- 'Champ' released from Nebraska.
- 'Bison' released from North Dakota.
- 'Bonilla' released from North Dakota.
- 'Roundtree' released from Missouri.
- 'Sunnyview' released from South Dakota.

PawneeButtesSeed Inc.

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