

PLAINS BRISTLEGRASS

Setaria vulpiseta



ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Native to the U.S. Grows in Arizona, Texas, Oklahoma and north to New Mexico and Colorado. Warm-season, perennial bunchgrass 1 to 3' tall with rather wide leaves and narrow spike-like panicle heads 3 to 5" long with stiff hairs that extend from within the seeds.

GROWTH HABITS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

Occurs mostly on sandy and sandy loam soils in relatively low ppt. Adapted in areas from 3,000 to 7,000' elevation and is very drought resistant.

Grows on dry plains and along roadsides or other areas protected from grazing. Very early maturing; may produce two seed crops per season if rainfall conditions are good (one in the late spring and one in early fall). Good seed producer with a high seed stock to leaf ratio.

CULTURE

Plant 3 to 6 lbs. PLS per acre. Seed 1/2 - 1" deep in April in southern Great Plains areas or May-June in northern Great Plains. May be seeded in fall and winter to germinate as ground warms. Protect new seedlings from grazing until they are well established and rooted.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Used in conservation, pasture, hay and range mixes. Responds well to irrigation and makes considerable hay and pasture in pure stands. High quality forage when grazed if green and succulent. Becomes strawy after maturity. Grazing must be controlled. Will decrease on ranges that are continuously grazed. In mixtures, manage to protect plains bristle grass. It does not compete well with taller more aggressive plants. To maintain plant vigor and produce a seed, defer grazing every 2 to 3 years 80 to 90 days before seed maturity. Birds relish the seed.

IMPROVED VARIETIES

None listed for region.

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