

BUFFALOGRASS

Buchloe dactyloides



ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Native to southern Great Plains, Texas, Arizona and Colorado. A warm season, low growing, perennial sod-forming grass. Grows up to 4" high. Spreads rapidly by surface runners and forms a dense matted turf. Leaves fine, grayish-green during growing season turning to light straw color when plants mature. It is the dominant species of much of the short-grass region of the upland areas of the central Great Plains.

GROWTH HABITS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

Adapted to a wide range of soils and climatic conditions. Grows in calcareous clay and clay loam soils. Often found in native stands of blue grama. Often survives in a nearly pure stand with extreme overgrazing. Begins growth in

May and June and continues through the summer. Good cold tolerance. Withstands heavy grazing better than most grasses. Spreads by burrs, seed and weak stolons. It is rather unique in that the plants are unisexual (dioecious). About 1/2 of the plants in nature are female and produce seed burrs. Usually special equipment is used in harvesting the burrs which are found at or near ground level. The others are male in function and produce pollen.

CULTURE

Drill seed about 1/2" deep in pure stands at the rate of 11 to 20 lbs. PLS per acre. Use a firm seedbed. Plant April to May in central Great Plains or slightly earlier in southern Great Plains and June to July 15th in Southwest. Often seeded in winter months with emergence expected when soil temperatures rise. Usually seeded in mixtures with other adapted native grasses. Better establishment using a protective cover of non-volunteering crop, stubble or mulch. Tall growing plants can over-top buffalo grass and reduce stands.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Provides an excellent ground cover, wide climatic adaptation. It is relatively easy to establish and can be used for low maintenance turf. Ideally suited for erosion control on range and pasture with heavy soils. Widely used for forage. Withstands heavy grazing better than other grasses native to the Great Plains region. However, it should be properly managed and cared for. It is a very palatable grass but very low growing.

IMPROVED VARIETIES

- 'Texoka' released from Oklahoma.
- 'Bison' released from Oklahoma.
- 'Plains' released from Texas.
- 'Topgun' released from Texas.
- 'Tatanka' released from Nebraska.
- 'Cody' released from Nebraska.



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