

PRAIRIE CORDGRASS

Spartina pectinata



ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Native to U.S. and distributed throughout the Great Plains and north to Canada. A warm-season, coarse, rhizomatous, perennial grass. 3 to 6' tall forming dense sod patches. Leaves 8 to 24" long, rolled when dry. Seed head spike with spikelets 2 to 3" long.

GROWTH HABITS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

Adapted to saline soils along streams and lake edges and sub-irrigated areas. In the eastern states extends into brackish marshes along the coast. Growth starts early in the spring with rapid growth occurring from late spring through summer. Grows in dense mats from stout, scaly rhizomes. May grow in almost pure stands. Produces seed heads in late summer.

CULTURE

Plant 1/4" deep on finely textured soils and 3/4" on coarse textured soils. Firm seedbed desired. Seed in non-volunteering crop stubble or mulch needed on eroded sites. Irrigation, if available, aids in getting stands started. Plant about 5 lbs. PLS per acre, More if broadcasting on bare or harsher sites, or for dense, early stands. Seeding dates vary from April 1 to May 15 in central Great Plains and January to April in southern Great Plains and and June 15 to July 15 for Transpecos and southwestern area.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Used for pasture and hay. Early growth can be grazed or cut for hay. Mature growth becomes harsh and stemmy. Where this grass is a key management species, no more than 50 % of current year's growth by weight should be grazed. Heavy spring grazing will weaken plants. Prairie cordgrass responds to summer grazing deferments of at least 90 days every 2 to 3 years.

IMPROVED VARIETIES

'Atkins' released from Kansas.

'Red River' released from North Dakota.

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