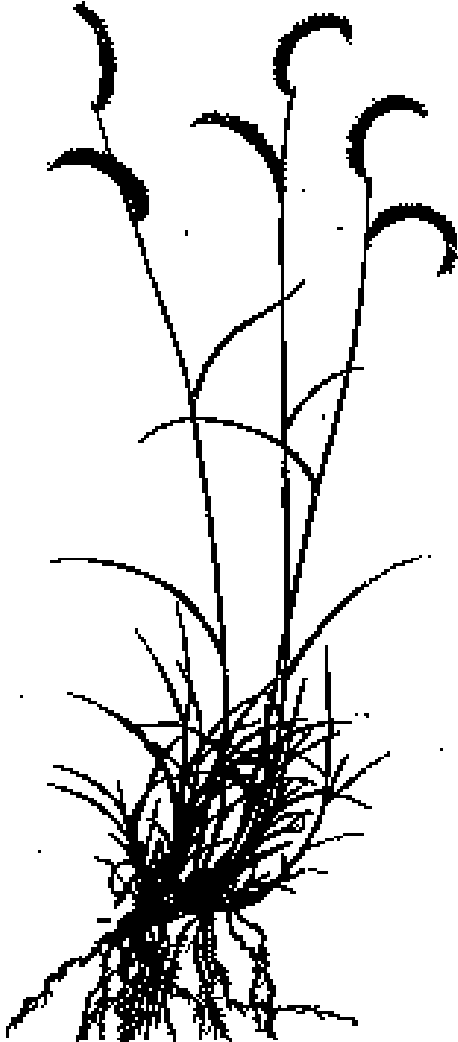


BLUE GRAMA

Bouteloua gracilis



ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Major native species of the western Great Plains and the Southwest. One of the most widely distributed of all native grasses. A warm season, open sod-forming short grass. However, it has a bunchgrass growth form in South and is more of a sod-former in the North, at higher elevations and when closely grazed. Densely tufted, usually 6 to 24" tall with gray-green basal leaves. Has bluish-purple cast when young and takes on straw color at maturity.

GROWTH HABITS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

Best adapted on heavy, rolling upland soils. Does well on sandy to clayey soils, less vigorous on sands and clays. Tolerant of soil salinity and commonly persists on alkaline soils. Rarely seen on even weakly acid soils. Rather low level of fertility demand. Not shade-tolerant. Very drought-tolerant. Has unique ability to become semidormant and make quick recovery when moisture comes. Good winter-hardiness. May produce two or more seed crops in one year, with proper moisture may flower and produce seed in 60 days.

CULTURE

Drill seed (with special grass drill) 1/4 -1/2" deep on firm seed bed or broadcast about same depth. Better establishment in protective cover of non-volunteering crop, stubble or mulch. Plant 1 to 3 lbs. PLS per acre. Plant April to mid-May in Central Great Plains, slightly earlier in southern Great Plains and June 15 to July 15 in Southwest. Often seeded in winter months with emergence expected when soil temperatures rise. Control weeds and protect from grazing until plants well-rooted and have produced seed heads.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Widely used for range, pasture, and occasionally for hay. Often seeded in mixtures to control erosion. In more recent years has been used to some extent for lawns. Also widely used over much of the Southwest and the Great Plains area for reseeding disturbed or abandoned cultivated acres. Native stands may be grazed continuously all summer or all year long if not overgrazed. Highly nutritional, even when dormant in winter time. Rotational grazing should be practiced.

IMPROVED VARIETIES

'Alma' released from New Mexico and Colorado.

'Lovington' released from New Mexico.

'Hachita' released from New Mexico and Colorado.

'Bad River' released from South Dakota.

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