

GREEN SPRANGLETOP

Leptochloa dubia



ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Native to southwestern U.S. and Florida. Medium tall, warm season, short-lived (essentially biennial) bunchgrass. Wiry erect or spreading stems 2 to 4' tall or more with numerous scabrous, blue-green to dark green leaves 6 to 18" long. Inflorescence an open panicle up to 12" long with drooping branches on 4 to 8" stems.

GROWTH HABITS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

Thrives on rocky hills and canyons and sandy soils, in southern Florida, Oklahoma and Texas to Arizona. Rarely found naturally on deep sandy soils and deep clays in the Southwest but persistent when planted there. Tolerant of weakly saline and moderately alkaline soils. Starts growth in early April if moisture conditions

favorable. Intolerant of poorly drained soils or high water tables. May produce late spring or fall seed crops. Seeding success in Texas suggests affinity for calcareous soils. Very drought tolerant and moderately winter hardy, slightly less than weeping lovegrass.

CULTURE

Drill or broadcast 1/2 - 3/4" deep. Planting rate 1.7 to 2.5 lbs. PLS per acre in rows for seed or intensively managed pasture. When broadcast on drier, harsher soils and conditions, plant up to 3 lbs. PLS per acre. Plant March to April or August to September in southern plains and June 15 to July 15 in Arizona and New Mexico. Stands are more readily obtained if planted in non-volunteering crop stubble or mulched. Seeds germinate quickly.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Usually secondary or minor in native stands; managed for sustained high production of primary species. Used in conservation mixtures in rejuvenation of fields and native rangelands because of ease of establishment and volunteering. Also used as substitute for sorghum in highway mixtures due to its rapid germination, good seedling vigor, and less competition to slower developing species. Graze stands moderately, using no more than 50% of current herbage production and also allow 60 to 90 days rest in summer or early fall to allow reseeding.

Mostly used between 2,500 and 6,000' elevation in southern Arizona. Greens up during warm spells in winter in southern plains. Weak shade tolerance and has fair grazing tolerance. Good fire tolerance when dormant. Suitable for inclusion as quick developing element in seeding mixtures used for disturbed land stabilization.

IMPROVED VARIETIES

'Van Horn' released from Texas.

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