



‘Americus’ Indiangrass

Sorghastrum nutans (L.) Nash.

‘Americus’ Indiangrass [*Sorghastrum nutans* (L.) Nash] is a cultivar released in 2002 in cooperation with the Alabama Crop Improvement Association.

Description

Americus Indiangrass is a native, perennial, warm-season bunch grass that reproduces from seed and short, scaly rhizomes. It grows from 6 to 8 feet tall. Indiangrass is easily identified, even in its juvenile state, by the prominent, deeply notched, two-part, split ligule located where the leaf blade attaches to the leaf sheath. The leaf blades grow to 3 feet long, and narrow at the point of attachment. The seed head is a yellow plume-like panicle. Americus begins growth in early spring, often before last frost with the panicle seed head emerging from boot in September. There are approximately 175,000 seeds per pound of Americus Indiangrass.

Source

Americus cultivar is the result from a collection of 93 Southeastern accessions of Indiangrass. It originated from the cross of two accessions of germplasm from Alabama with two accessions from Georgia.

Conservation Uses

Americus Indiangrass is recommended for erosion control, field borders, wildlife habitat improvement, and restoration of native prairie and pine understory. Indiangrass is considered only moderately palatable forage after maturity and fair forage for winter grazing. It provides wildlife habitat for deer, turkey, quail, dove, song birds, and small mammals.

Area of Adaptation and Use

Americus Indiangrass has been evaluated in multiple years and locations across the piedmont and coastal plain of Georgia. In two years of comparison testing with other Indiangrass releases from the Plant Materials Program across the Southern US, from East Texas to Georgia, Americus has performed well.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Plantings should be done in spring, after danger of frost and soil temperatures are above 50 °F, at a rate of 8 - 10 lbs. pure live seed (PLS)/acre for monoculture plantings (30 PLS seed per square ft). For seed mixes, adjust the rate according to the desired percentage of Americus Indiangrass in the mix. Seed should be planted approximately ⅓ inch deep, and increased to ¼ inch depth in sandy soils. A clean, firm, and weed free seedbed, with adequate soil moisture, is essential to achieve a good stand. Firming the soil with a roller packer before seeding helps ensure seed is placed at the correct depth. Americus Indiangrass can be seeded with a native grass drill equipped with picker wheels for planting fluffy seed. A less preferred method of planting is broadcasting seeding on a prepared seedbed. If seed are broadcast planted, a roller packer or a light drag is needed to cover seed and to ensure good seed-to-soil contact. Seed may be mixed with a carrier such as sand or rice hulls to aid in seed dispersal. Hydroseeding may be used for areas not accessible by conventional planting equipment.



Figure 1. Americus Indiangrass in full bloom early October at JCPMC Americus, GA

Phosphorus and potassium fertilizer can be applied before planting, but nitrogen application is not recommended during the establishment phase. Applying nitrogen in the establishment year will promote weedy species growth which will inhibit the establishment of Indiangrass.

Grazing should be deferred from new plantings for at least one year. Do not graze or cut below 8 inches and allow ample recovery time between cutting or grazing events.

Periodic prescribed fire will help maintain stand health and stimulate production. Contact your local NRCS office for assistance with developing a prescribe grazing plan or burn plan. Mowing and pre-emergent herbicides may be used to control weed competition after establishment where applicable. For herbicide recommendations, contact your local county extension office.

Ecological Considerations

No severe insect or disease problems have been observed on Americus Indiangrass. However, Indiangrass is host to the leaf spot pathogen (*Colletotrichum caudatum*) and rust fungus (*Puccinia virgate*). The seed is wind distributed and may invade areas adjacent to plantings.

Seed and Plant Production

Seed production fields of Americus Indiangrass can be established from seed or plugs. Seed is harvested by direct combining or with a Flail Vac harvester. Seed yield varies greatly depending on weather, with yields at Americus, GA ranging from 27 to 166 lbs/ac. Seed should be stored at 50°F with a relative humidity of 50% to maintain long-term viability.

Availability

For conservation use: Americus Indiangrass has been released since 2002 and is available from the commercial seed market. Commercial seed production may be limited at times resulting in insufficient availability.

For seed or plant increase: A breeder seed field is maintained at Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center in Americus, GA. Limited quantities of seed are available to seed producers for increase and to other interested parties, as available.

Citations

Release Brochure for Americus Indiangrass [*Sorghastrum nutans* (L.) Nash]. USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service, Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center, Americus, GA.

Plant Fact Sheet for Indiangrass [*Sorghastrum nutans* (L.) Nash], Plants Database USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service

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For additional information about this and other plants, please contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office, or Conservation District <<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>>, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov/>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/>>



Figure 2. Americus Indiangrass spring growth at JCPMC Americus, GA

For more information, contact:

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<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/gapmc/>

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