

Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD), and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) announce the release of a sourced identified ecotype of indiangrass [*Sorghastrum nutans* (L.) Nash] for the Great Lakes region.

As a source identified release, this plant will be referred to as Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiangrass to document its original collection locations in the southern Lower Peninsula of Michigan. Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass is released as a source identified type of certified seed (natural track). It is a composite release that has been assigned the NRCS accession number 9084513.

This alternative release procedure is justified because sources and supplies of Michigan ecotype indiangrass are very limited and unable to meet the demand for this product. Propagation material of this ecotype is needed for ecosystem restoration and enhancement. The potential for immediate use is extremely high.



Collection Site Information

Seed was collected from native stands (as designated by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division) of indiangrass within the southern half of Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

Ecotype Description

Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass is a composite of several indiangrass collections and has features consistent with the species. It is a perennial, warm season bunch grass with short rhizomes and erect stems that reach a height of six feet. Leaf blades are folded in the bud shoot. Sheaths are round, open and may be hairy at the base. The prominent, membranous, claw-like ligules resemble a rifle sight. Indiangrass has a narrow plume-like seed head that turns golden at maturity.



Ecological Considerations and Evaluations

Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiangrass is a native Michigan plant material that has undergone no purposeful selection; therefore it should not differ in rate of spread, seed production, vigor nor behavior from naturally occurring indiangrass in this area. Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiangrass has been determined "OK to release" using environmental criteria adopted by the NRCS Plant Materials Program.

Anticipated Conservation Use

The anticipated use of Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiangrass includes providing food/cover for wildlife, increase species diversity, controlling erosion, and restoring native plant environments. Indiangrass provides seed and possible habitat for insects, both of which are used as food sources by songbirds, game birds, and small mammals.

Many wildlife species also utilize indiangrass for nesting, escape, and winter cover. As this is a native species and composite it will be useful as a component in the restoration and diversification of native habitats, particularly southern Michigan, its source of origin. Indiangrass may also be useful in combination with other warm and cool season grasses for erosion control because of its massive root system.

Anticipated Area of Adaptation

This species is found in dry to moist open areas throughout much of the United States, and is a major component of tall and mixed grass prairies.

Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiangrass's primary utilization area is expected to be within the Great Lakes region.



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Availability of Plant Materials

Seed/plant stock of Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiangrass will be maintained cooperatively by the USDA-NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and made available to qualified parties for source increase purposes.

For More Information

Please visit our Plant Materials website to learn more about using plants to solve conservation problems.

<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

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