

## Native Plant Releases

### Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center

The Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center (PMC) is a branch of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service. It is one of 26 plant materials centers located throughout the United States. The Center is located in the northwest corner of Americus in southwestern Georgia and is approximately 40 miles north of Albany. Areas served include Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina and parts of Tennessee and Florida.

It is our mission to develop plant materials and state-of-the-art plant science technology to solve natural resource problems and meet the objectives of environmental programs. Our program emphasizes the use of native plants. We develop, test and release superior adapted plants to commercial growers. In addition to plant releases, plant production and management technology are active parts of the program.

The Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center is studying several native warm season grasses for forage, nutrient uptake, wildlife habitat improvement and 2002 Farm Bill implementation.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Plant Materials Centers in the Southeast are conducting studies on native plant materials to meet the conservation needs in the Southeast Region. The studies involve the collection and evaluation of native plant materials that have a Southeastern origin. The present commercial source of native grass seed now comes from other regions and the 'native plant movement' is demanding plants (local ecotypes) and seeds that have an origin close to the area of use.



**Union Germplasm Purpletop**



**Newberry Germplasm Indiagrass**



**Durham Germplasm Switchgrass**

**Durham Germplasm Switchgrass** - Durham Germplasm will be primarily used for erosion, wildlife habitat improvement and native plant restoration in North Carolina. The plant release impacts the 2002 farm bill by providing an adapted native warm season grass for the Southeast.

**Union Germplasm Purpletop and Newberry Germplasm Indiagrass** - The purpletop seed was collected in Union County, South Carolina and the indiagrass seed was collected in Newberry County, South Carolina and by members of the South Carolina Native Plant Society and employees of the US Forest Service in South Carolina. For the first time we are partnering with the US Forest Service (Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests) in South Carolina and the South Carolina Native Plant Society to release two plants that were collected on the National Forests. These local ecotypes are drastically needed to restore eroding sites on the National Forests in South Carolina.

The Plant Materials Center has nine active studies involving plants native to the Southeastern U.S. Major emphasis has been placed on establishment, growth, management and culture of native warm season grasses. Big bluestem, switchgrass, little bluestem, indiagrass and eastern gamagrass show great potential as cattle forage and as wildlife habitat improvement plants.

Until recently there were no native warm season grasses selected for the Southeastern U.S. However, in the summer of 2002 the Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center in Americus, Georgia released ‘Americus’ Indiangrass. Americus was selected from plant material originating in the Southeast. It is adapted to upland sites of our region for use as cattle forage, wildlife habitat improvement, soil conservation and plant community restoration.

In 2003, the Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center released ‘Kinchafoonee’ Virginia Wildrye. The Jamie L. Whitten Plant Materials Center released ‘Highlander’ Eastern Gamagrass and Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center and Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station participated in the release as cooperators.



**“Kinchafoonee” Virginia Wildrye**



**‘Americus’ Indiangrass**



**‘Highlander’ Eastern Gamagrass**

Iuka eastern gamagrass is the best adapted variety commercially available for the Southeast. Evaluation plantings in Georgia, such as the demonstration planting at Fort Valley State University, shows good seedling vigor and growth the first year of establishment



**Iuka eastern gamagrass evaluation  
at Fort Valley State University**

## **About the Author**

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### **Disclosures**

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