

Prairie Junegrass *Koeleria macrantha* (Ledeb.)

J.A. Schultes

Plant symbol = KOMA



Contributed By: USDA NRCS Elsberry Plant Materials Center

Alternate Names

Crested hair grass
Koeler's grass

Key Web Sites

Extensive information about this species is linked to the Plants web site. To access this information, go the plants.usda.gov, select this plant, and utilize the links at the bottom of the Plants Profile for this species.

Uses

Junegrass can be used for roadside plantings, prairie restoration, wildlife cover, landscaping, and plant diversity in prairie communities.

Status

Please consult the plants.usda.gov and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

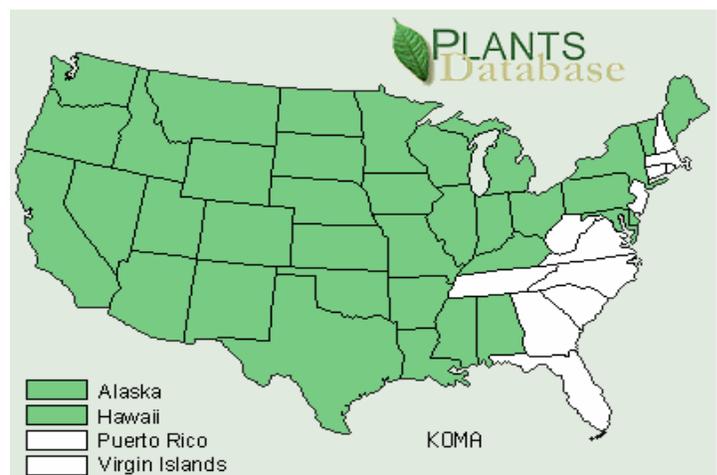
Description

Junegrass is a native, cool season, perennial grass. It has slender, unbranched stems that grow 1 to 2 feet tall in small, close tufts characteristic of bunchgrasses. The plant is leafy at the base. The leaf blades are thin, less than 1/8 inch across, and grow up to 12 inches long. The leaves are dark and are stiff and flat. Growth is completed in late June when the grass goes dormant until fall or the following spring. As the leaves dry, they curl and twist into a spiral shape. They are unevenly veined and rough on the upper surface. Leaf sheaths, at least the lower ones, are usually hairy. These hairs are distinctly curved or bent. The seed head is a dense, unbranched cylinder that is 1 to 6 inches long and 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick.

Habitat/Range

Common in dry upland prairies and open upland savannas throughout the tallgrass region, and becoming a dominant grass in some northern prairies.

Known Distribution



Establishment

Prepare a clean weed free seedbed by disking and rolling or cultipacking to firm the soil.

Seeding Method: Drill or broadcast.

Seeding Depth: 1/8 – 1/4 inch.

Seeding Rate: Based on 2,135,000 seeds/pound, the following are general seeding rates. Actual rates may vary depending on site locations and purpose of planting.

For seed production in the Midwest region:
Solid stand – 40 to 60 pure live seed (PLS) per square foot or 0.8 to 1.2 pounds PLS per acre.
Planting in rows – (24 to 36 inches), 20 to 30 PLS per linear foot (0.2 – 0.3 pounds PLS per acre).

For prairie planting: Use 5 – 10 PLS per square foot (0.1 to 0.2) pound PLS per acre of Junegrass planted with other prairie species.

Use no fertilizer the establishment year unless soil test indicates a low deficiency of less than 15 PPM of phosphorus and or less than 90 PPM of potassium. Use no nitrogen during the establishment year as this can encourage weed competition.

Seed Quality:

The seed of prairie junegrass can be seeded unstratified in the fall or stratified in the spring. The seed can be dry stratified in a cooler with temperatures from 35 to 50 degrees Fahrenheit, with humidity from 25%-35% for 30-60 days. Junegrass, like other cool season species, can be spring seeded mid-March to mid-May (Missouri) and fall seeded mid-August to the end of September.

Seed Sources:

Adapted release of Central Iowa Germplasm is the only known release with seed commercially available from growers. Adapted local sources from private collections can be purchased from commercial growers.

Management

Reduce weed competition by mowing over the height of the prairie junegrass plants or cultivating between the rows. Use a recommended broadleaf weed herbicide for control of broadleaf weed competition. Remove dead plant material by shredding in the spring for faster green-up. Burning of dead plant refuge can weaken the plants unless done before it has broken dormancy.

Pests and Potential Problems

Prairie junegrass has been grown at the Elsberry Plant Materials Center for 3 years and there have been no indications of problems with any kind of pests.

Environmental Concerns

Prairie junegrass is not known to invade in areas where this species does not naturally occur.

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Elsberry PMC Production Field

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS <<http://plants.usda.gov>> and Plant Materials Program Web sites <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>.

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