



Ozark Germplasm little bluestem

Schizachyrium scoparium (Michx.) Nash

Ozark Germplasm little bluestem was released in 2010 by the USDA NRCS Elsberry Plant Materials Center, Elsberry, Missouri as a selected class release.

Description

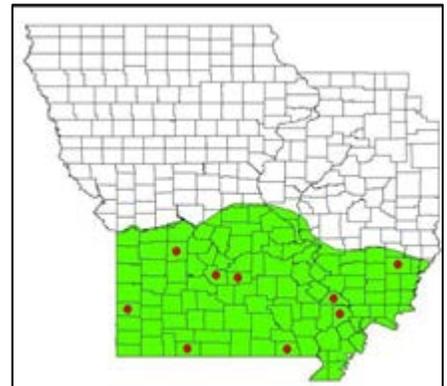
Ozark Germplasm little bluestem is typically 3 to 5 feet tall, erect, slender to robust, with coarse compressed stems and basal leaves. Basal shoots are flat, bluish, and somewhat bulbous at the bottom. Mature plants are green and often appear purplish at the base. Leaves are nearly hairless except for a small tuft at the junction of sheath and blade, and tend to fold with maturity. Seed heads form racemes which appear hairy and are about 3 inches long. After frost, the entire plant has a reddish cast.



Seed production field of Ozark Germplasm little bluestem.

Source

Ozark Germplasm was developed from 11 populations of little bluestem collects from Major Land Resource Areas (MLRA) in Missouri and Illinois (Fig. 1). Collections from the Ozark Highland MLRA (116A) which included the counties of Perry, Cape Girardeau, Ripley, Taney, Miller, and Maries in Missouri; Cherokee Prairies MLRA (112) which included collections from Barton and Pettis counties in Missouri, and a collection from Claypan MLRA (113) in Wayne County, Illinois. These collections were chosen for forage quality and biomass production. Ozark is quick to emerge, has high seedling vigor, and has later seed maturity than the cultivar 'Aldous'.



Collection locations of Ozark Germplasm little bluestem.

Conservation Uses

Ozark Germplasm is recommended for range and pasture seeding as a component of a mix with other native warm season grasses, conservation cover and field borders for soil erosion control, prairie restoration and landscaping, and wildlife habitat.

Area of Adaptation

Ozark Germplasm is adapted to Major Land Resource Areas (MLRA) 112, 113, 115 and 116A (southern Missouri and Illinois and northern Arkansas). It has performed well in limited number of field plantings in Missouri on deep to shallow, sandy to fine-textured soils.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Ozark Germplasm can be established from seed using a native grass drill. In April-May, plant seed into a firm, weed-free seedbed at a rate of 6.5 Pure Live Seed (PLS) pounds per acre, or 40 PLS per square foot at a depth of 1/4 inch when the soil temperature reaches 55 to 60°F. When included in a mixture with other native warm season grasses, Ozark Germplasm should comprise 10-25% of the mixture. A dormant seeding in late November through February has been achieved with moderate success. The number of seeds per pound is 241,000.

Weed control can be accomplished by mowing, especially during the establishment year. For weed control options, consult with your local agricultural cooperative extension service for assistance with recommendations on herbicides and application rates. Ozark Germplasm responds to fire in the dormant season. Consult with your local NRCS field office for assistance with a burn plan.

Fertilization is not recommended the initial year of planting unless the soil test indicates a severe deficiency in soil nutrients. Nitrogen should not be applied until the grass is fully established, especially the first year of establishment due to the potential for nitrogen to promote excessive weed competition. Use soil test recommendations to provide optimum fertility for production.

Contact the local NRCS field office for assistance with developing a prescribed grazing plan to maintain stand longevity and productivity when utilized as a livestock forage.

Ecological Considerations

No problems with insects or diseases were observed on Ozark Germplasm. An environmental evaluation did not indicate any issues with it becoming a problem outside of its intended area of conservation use.

Seed and Plant Production

Seeding rate for seed production in 12, 24, and 36 inch rows is 6.5, 3.2, and 2.2 PLS lb/acre, respectively. For combine harvesters, adjust concave clearance between ____ inch spacing, cylinder speed of ____ rpm, air flow on the lowest setting or no air flow, and open the chaffer sieve approximately _____. Seed should be stored between 40-50°F with a relative humidity between 35-50% to maintain long-term viability. Ozark Germplasm must be isolated from other cultivated varieties and native populations of little bluestem by a minimum of ____ feet.

Availability

Breeder seed is available to growers from the USDA-NRCS Elsberry Plant Materials Center. Ozark Germplasm is identified by USDA NRCS as accession number 9083271.

Citation

Release Brochure for Ozark Germplasm little bluestem [*Schizachyrium scoparium* (Michx.) Nash]. USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Elsberry Plant Materials Center. Elsberry, Missouri 63343.

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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>>

For more information, contact:

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