

# Seed News



Plant Materials Center, Bismarck, North Dakota

February 2013

by Wayne Markegard, Plant Materials Specialist

## Seed Availability

2012 was a difficult year for many seed producers as hot temperatures and widespread drought conditions left growers (especially those in southern South Dakota and Minnesota) with a substantially smaller harvest. With diminished supply, seed prices are considerably higher for many warm-season species of grasses and forbs. Grower reports indicate that blue grama, sideoats grama, and Indiangrass inventories have been impacted the most. Be sure to get your name on the list early if you are planning to purchase seed from reputable growers in your area.

## A New Plant Release

The Bismarck Plant Materials Center has released Bounty Germplasm big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) for conservation use in native plantings throughout the Northern Great Plains and Upper Midwest. Bounty is a selected class pre-varietal release developed from an original seed composite from 49 counties in Minnesota and eastern South Dakota. It provides considerable species diversity for broader area of adaptation and long-term stability. Its many conservation uses include: prairie and ecological revegetation, livestock forage on pasture and hayland, wildlife habitat, and native landscaping. Bounty Germplasm big bluestem is a leafy, fine-stemmed, early-maturing selection that ranks high in protein and feed value when compared with other big bluestem varieties adapted to this area. Because of its broad genetic diversity, high forage quality, and good seed production, Bounty is expected to perform well throughout this region. Foundation seed (from the PMC) and certified seed (from growers) should be more readily available in 2014.

### Who We Are

The Bismarck Plant Materials Center (PMC) is one of 27 PMCs operated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The Bismarck PMC serves the States of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. It is the mission of the plant materials program to develop plant materials and plant science technology for the conservation of our natural resources. The Bismarck PMC was established in 1954 as part of the Soil Conservation Service, now Natural Resources Conservation Service.

USDA-NRCS  
Plant Materials Center  
3308 University Drive  
Bismarck, ND 58504  
(701) 250-4330

Plant Materials Specialist  
Wayne Markegard  
(701) 530-2075

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

Because of its broad genetic diversity, high forage quality, and good seed production, Bounty is expected to perform well throughout this region. Foundation seed (from the PMC) and certified seed (from growers) should be more readily available in 2014.



## Growers of Bismarck PMC Grass and Forb Releases

The PMC has a good seed inventory of most foundation grasses with the exception of a few species. There are also ample quantities of purple prairieclover and Medicine Creek Maximilian sunflower.

## Possible Future Releases

The PMC is currently evaluating several grass species for potential release. These include Virginia wildrye, Indiangrass, prairie sandreed, prairie dropseed, prairie junegrass, and sand bluestem. There is a good possibility of improved selections being available in the future for seed increase and conservation use.

## Vendor Lists

We continue to maintain lists of conservation seed and plant providers that can be downloaded by selecting the "Seed Price and Vendors List" link located on the

PMC homepage at <http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/ndpmc/>. If you are aware of additional providers that should be considered for one or both of these lists, please contact us with that information.

## 'Manifest' Intermediate Wheatgrass

One of the easier grasses to establish or use for seed production is intermediate wheatgrass. The previously recognized separate species of intermediate and pubescent wheatgrass are now recognized as one species, *Thinopyrum intermedium*. The pubescent strain is considered somewhat more drought tolerant, and the seed parts and leaves are covered in dense hairs with a more blue coloration. It is a long-lived, cool-season, introduced species. The large, smooth seed is relatively easy to harvest, and is a good candidate for the first time seed grower. Intermediate wheatgrass is adapted to the 10-15 inch precipitation zone. Forage quality is good, and seed yields of 300-500 pounds/acre are not uncommon. There are many different varieties recommended for the Northern Great Plains. 'Oahe' intermediate has been a long-time standard and is still available. The Bismarck PMC produced Mandan-759 for many years. It was replaced by 'Manska' pubescent, which showed higher daily gains in yearling steers. 'Reliant' intermediate was developed for use with alfalfa. 'Haymaker' and 'Beefmaker' intermediate were developed in Nebraska for better quantity and quality. 'Manifest' is our newest release developed for higher tiller density by the Northern Great Plains Research Laboratory in Mandan, ND. It has been a favorite at the PMC because it is easy to establish and has good forage and seed yields. We have a good supply of Manifest seed on the shelf, and are including it for public demonstration in many conservation field plantings in our area.



## Foundation Seed Order Information 2013

Listed here are prices of Foundation and Select Class grass and forb seed produced by the Bismarck PMC. This seed is for sale through NDSU Foundation Seedstocks to commercial seed growers for the sole purpose of certified seed production. To order seed, contact [Wayne. Markegard@nd.usda.gov](mailto:Wayne.Markegard@nd.usda.gov) or call (701) 530-2075. All seed prices are subject to change. Once ordered, a confirmation letter will be sent from the PMC and billing will be sent from NDSU Foundation Seedstocks. Payment in full to NDSU Foundation Seedstocks must be received before seed shipment. If payment is not received within 30 days, the order will be cancelled. Prices are based on a Pure Live Seed (PLS) pound. Shipping charges (in the U.S.) will be \$1.00/PLS pound.

RELEASES	CLASS*	COMMON NAME	COST/PLS LB
Native Warm-Season Grasses			U. S. Dollars
Badlands Ecotype	Select (G2)	little bluestem	20.00
Itasca Germplasm	Select (G2)	little bluestem	20.00
Bad River Ecotype	Select (G2)	blue grama	**
Bison	Foundation	big bluestem	15.00
Bonilla	Foundation	big bluestem	15.00
Bounty Germplasm	Select (G1)	big bluestem	**
Dacotah	Foundation	switchgrass	9.00
Forestburg	Foundation	switchgrass	9.00
Pierre	Foundation	sideoats grama	**
Red River Germplasm	Select (G1)	prairie cordgrass	85.00
Tomahawk	Foundation	Indiangrass	18.00
Native Cool-Season Grasses			
Lodorm	Foundation	green needlegrass	**
Mandan	Foundation	Canada wildrye	13.00
Rodan	Foundation	western wheatgrass	9.00
Introduced Grasses			
Mankota	Foundation	Russian wildrye	8.00
Nordan	Foundation	crested wheatgrass	5.00
Manifest	Foundation	intermediate wheatgrass	5.50
Manska	Foundation	pubescent wheatgrass	5.50
Reliant	Foundation	intermediate wheatgrass	5.50
Native Forbs/Legumes			
Bismarck Germplasm	Select (G1)	narrow-leaved purple coneflower	200.00
Bismarck Germplasm	Select (G1)	purple prairieclover	30.00
Bismarck Germplasm	Select (G1)	stiff sunflower	250.00
Medicine Creek Germplasm	Select (G1)	Maximilian sunflower	50.00

\*Generation number for select class materials is shown in parentheses (G1 = generation 1).  
\*\*Contact us for availability.