

STIFF SUNFLOWER (*Helianthus pauciflorus*)

PLANTING GUIDE

Stiff sunflower is a perennial forb native to the plains, from Manitoba to New Mexico and from Wisconsin to Montana. It is found extensively on upland sites and frequently on the lowlands.

ORIGIN

9047233 stiff sunflower is a composite of nine accessions collected in 1975 from the following North Dakota counties: Burleigh, Grant, Slope, Mercer, Dunn, and Oliver.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Stiff sunflower is a strongly rhizomatous forb which often forms dense colonies. Plant height varies from 1 to 5 feet, with blossoming in late summer. Flowers have yellow petals surrounding the brown to purplish centers. The stiff, leathery leaves occur mostly at the base of the plant and have three prominent ribs. The stems are stiff and rough.

(actual seed size)

PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

Evaluate this accession/species as a native forb to add diversity in range mixtures and prairie restoration and to provide erosion control, forage quality, and wildlife benefits.

PLANTING RECOMMENDATIONS

Site: Stiff sunflower grows on many different soils but is found primarily on upland range sites such as silty, shallow and thin upland; and less frequently on lowlands such as limy subirrigated. This plant is readily eaten by livestock, so it is rarely found on lands which have been long overgrazed.

Rate of Seeding: Stiff sunflower is not usually seeded as a single species but rather in a mix of other native species. On moist sites (limy subirrigated) it can be included with little bluestem, big bluestem, and switchgrass. On drier sites (silty, shallow, and thin upland) it can be mixed with blue grama, little bluestem, and western wheatgrass. There are approximately 85,000 seeds/lb. As part of a mixture, a seeding rate of 1/4 PLS lb/ac will result in about one seed per every two square feet. If a more dense stand of stiff sunflower is desired for specific areas, seeding rates up to 1 PLS lb/ac may be used.

Date of Seeding:

Spring seeding prior to May 15; dormant seeding after October 20.

PLANTING METHOD

Stiff sunflower is a small, smooth seed that flows easily through most drills. Generally, seed is mixed with other native species. If seed settles to the bottom of the box, it should be added in frequent intervals rather than all at once. The seed should be planted at a depth not to exceed 1/2 inch into a firm seedbed. Seed of stiff sunflower has high dormancy. A majority of the seed planted in the spring may not germinate until the following spring. Dormant seeding with winter stratification will enhance germination.

MANAGEMENT

Stiff sunflower is persistent and long-lived with good management using key grass species as indicators.

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