

A Conservation Plant Released by the Natural Resources Conservation Service
Los Lunas Plant Materials Center, Los Lunas, New Mexico

'Niner'

sideoats grama

Bouteloua cutipendula (Michx.)
Torr. var. *caespitosa*
Gould & Kapadia



'Niner' sideoats grama (*Bouteloua cutipendula*)

Description

'Niner' sideoats grama (*Bouteloua cutipendula* (Michx.) Torr. var. *caespitosa*) is a tall (1.5- 3-ft.), long-lived, perennial bunchgrass that is extremely drought- and fire-tolerant. The culms of flowering stems have up to 50 short pendant branches with each having two to seven spikelets. These inflorescence branches are alternately opposite from each other. With maturity, they fold together appearing to be derived from one side, hence the common name of sideoats. The leaves are mostly basal, bluish in color in spring and fading to yellowish in color in winter. The botanical variety *caespitosa* varies from the typical variety because of the absence of creeping rhizomes.

Source

Niner sideoats grama was originally collected in 1957, 4 miles west of Socorro, New Mexico. The collection site's elevation is 4,700 ft., and receives 9 inches of annual precipitation. Niner was found growing in association with blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), black grama (*Bouteloua eriopoda*), bush muhly (*Muhlenbergia porteri*), plains bristlegrass (*Setaria leucopilia*), green sprangletop (*Leptochloa dubia*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), 'James' galleta (*Hilaria jamesii*), Hall's panicgrass (*Panicum hallii*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*) and littleleaf sumac (*Rhus*

microphylla).

Conservation Uses

Niner sideoats grama produces abundant forage on many range sites. It provides moderate- to high-quality forage for all types of grazing livestock. It is fair forage for wildlife and it provides good nesting cover for upland game birds and escape cover for all wildlife.

Area of Adaptation and Use

Sideoats grama is found from Nebraska to Texas and west to California. In the Southwest, it is one of the most important forage species because of its high palatability and vigorous growth.

In New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Texas, Utah and Oklahoma, Niner sideoats grama is adapted up to elevations of 8,200 ft. and in lower precipitation areas.

Niner sideoats grama is recommended for a wide range of soils and climatic conditions, but it performs better on medium- to heavy-textured soils.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Prepare a clean, weed-free seedbed well in advance of planting, either by tillage or herbicides. Prior to planting, the seedbed should be firm and have accumulated soil moisture. The best time to plant is in the early-spring, late-summer or early-autumn, using a native grass drill with picker wheels or a medium to large seed box to ensure a good planting of the seed. Broadcast seeding may be used in areas not easily planted with a drill but some type of additional coverage such as cultipacking or light dragging will be beneficial to ensure good seed-to-soil contact. Plant seed to a depth of 1/8- to 1/4-inch. Do not plant too deep. If one plant per-square-foot becomes established in field plantings, the seeding is considered successful.

Do not allow grazing the first year after planting. After establishment, either continuous or rotational grazing can be allowed. A minimum stubble height of 6-inches should be maintained when under continuous grazing. Plants should be allowed to produce seed annually to ensure stand health.

Ecological Considerations

Thrips and rice stink bugs can limit seed production on seed production fields.

Seed and Plant Production

Niner seed matures evenly and is ready for harvest from September to October (in Los Lunas, NM), and can be harvested with or without swathing using a field combine.

Availability

Breeder seed is produced and maintained by the USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Center, Los Lunas, New Mexico. Foundation seed is available to certified growers through New Mexico State University Seed Certification.

For more information, contact: Los Lunas
Plant Materials Center 1036 Miller Road
Los Lunas, NM 87031
Tel: 505-865-7340
Fax: 505-865-5163
<https://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/nmpmc>

Citation

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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 National Database Website <<http://plants.usda.gov/>> or the Plant Materials Program Website <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/>>.



This is a joint release among the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Los Lunas Plant Materials Center, New Mexico State University's Los Lunas Agricultural Science Center, and Colorado State University.

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