

Introduction

La Salle Germplasm Arizona cottontop (*Digitaria californica* (Benth.) Henr.) is a blend of 12 collections from the Rio Grande Plains of Texas. This release is a cooperative effort of *South Texas Natives*, the USDA-NRCS E. “Kika” de la Garza Plant Materials Center, and the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station in Beeville. Collections comprising this release were selected for seed quality and production, plant vigor, forage production, and adaptability throughout the South Texas area.



Description

La Salle Germplasm Arizona cottontop is a warm season perennial bunchgrass native to southern Texas. The seed head measures 2 to 5 inches and bears a number of fluffy white seeds. Plants are 3 to 5 feet in height and can produce the cotton-like seedheads throughout the year. La Salle Germplasm will readily reseed itself, and individual plants are long lived.

Uses & Adaptation

La Salle Germplasm was developed for use in native rangeland restoration and wildlife plantings in the Rio Grande Plains of Texas. La Salle Germplasm provides good forage for livestock and cover and food for many species of native wildlife. It performs well on most soil types, including sandy loam, clay, and clay loam soil types, with the exception of very sandy soils. This germplasm is compatible in plantings with other native species. The good seedling vigor and rapid germination make La Salle Germplasm an excellent choice for planting after brush control or other disturbance. La Salle Germplasm also shows promise for use in adding diversity to stands of exotic grasses, since establishment into existing stands of buffleggrass has been observed.

La Salle Germplasm has shown good performance in the South Texas Plains, Gulf Prairie and Marshes, and Coastal Sand Plains regions of South Texas. Although testing in adjacent ecoregions is lacking, adaptability



in eco-regions such as the southern Edwards Plateau and eastern Trans Pecos Mountains is possible but may be limited.



Seed Quality Traits

Seed quality ranges from 40-80% pure live seed. Active seed germination of La Salle Germplasm is excellent when compared to other native grasses, averaging 63%. Up to 93% of active germination takes place 3-5 days from the onset of favorable conditions. Seed dormancy ranges from 10-15%. La Salle Germplasm contains approximately 677,000 seeds per pound.

Planting Methods

Recommended rangeland seeding rate for pure stands is 1½ to 2 pounds pure live seed per acre. Excellent results are achieved when La Salle Germplasm is seeded in the spring to late summer. When La Salle Germplasm is used in a mixture, seeding rate should be adjusted according to the percentage

of Arizona cottontop desired on the site. Application of a seed coating is recommended to facilitate planting. Coated seed can be drilled or broadcasted. Seed should not be planted deeper than ¼ inch. Best results are possible in clean, well prepared seedbeds; however, La Salle Germplasm will establish over time in existing vegetation. Plantings of La Salle Germplasm should be deferred from grazing or disturbance for 1 year after planting.



Management

Stands of La Salle Germplasm should be monitored closely to prevent overgrazing. La Salle Germplasm will perform best under rotational grazing systems. Plants should be allowed to set seed yearly to ensure vigorous stands. Mowing or burning old growth while dormant helps to stimulate seed and forage production. Plants can be mowed to 3 inches yearly with no adverse effects.

Availability

Breeder seed of La Salle Germplasm Arizona cottontop is maintained by *South Texas Natives* in conjunction with the Texas Foundation Seed Service. Breeder seed can be obtained by contacting *South Texas Natives*.

For More Information

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La Salle

Germplasm Arizona Cottontop
Digitaria californica (Benth.) Henr.

