

WHORLED DROPSEED

Sporobolus pyramidatus

(Lam.) A.S. Hitchc.

Plant symbol = SPPY2

Contributed by: USDA-NRCS James E. 'Bud' Smith
Plant Materials Center, Knox City, Texas



Kurt Schaefer

Grasses of Goodwell and Texhoma (Texas County), Oklahoma

Alternate Names

Madagascar dropseed

Uses

The primary use of whorled dropseed is to stabilize saline and/or alkaline soil conditions.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status and wetland indicator values.

Description

Grass Family (*Poaceae*). Whorled dropseed is a warm-season, low, tufted, perennial grass. The height ranges from 4 inches to 19 inches. The leaf blade is flat, mostly basal, 1–5 inches long and usually 1/16–1/8 inch wide; glabrous or few long hairs near the base. The leaf sheath is shorter than the internodes, glabrous except for a few long hairs on either side of the collar. The ligule is a short, densely ciliate membrane. The seedhead is panicle, contracted during the early stages of growth, but becoming pyramidal at maturity with branches

successively shorter from the base upward; lower branches in definite whorls. Spikelets are approximately 1/16 inch long, awnless and on a glabrous pedicel.

Distribution

Consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site (<http://plants.usda.gov>)

Adaptation

Whorled dropseed grows in open, disturbed sites (i.e., overgrazed sites, along roadways, etc.) on a wide variety of soil types, frequently on coastal sands and on sandy or saline clay or alkaline inland soils. It grows in gravelly soil, overgrazed sites, and especially along streets. General distribution of whorled dropseed is from Kansas to Colorado, south to Texas, Louisiana and Arizona, in southern Florida and throughout tropical America.

Establishment

There are currently no guidelines for establishment of this plant species. In the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in southwestern Oklahoma a field observation of stands of *Sporobolus pyramidatus* indicated a reduction of growth of *Sporobolus* in the center of the stands. The decaying shoots of *Sporobolus* inhibited the growth of its own seedlings. There is also an indication that the leachate and root exudates of *Sporobolus* may be responsible for its own decline.

Management

There are currently no guidelines for management of this plant species. Seed has been reported to be viable for up to 10 years with rapid seed dispersal facilitated by sticky mature seed.

Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

There are currently no cultivars of whorled dropseed in seed commercial industry.



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Oklahoma

Edited: jld

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Reference

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS <<http://plants.usda.gov>> and Plant Materials Program Web sites <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>.

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