

Adding Diversity to Lesser Prairie-Chicken Habitat Rainbow Germplasm Wild Plum (*Prunus* sp.)

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Wild plum is a native, perennial, warm-season shrub or small tree. Plants sucker out, creating thickets ranging from 4 to 10 feet tall. The ½ to 1 inch fruit ranges in color from deep yellow to bright red and ripens from June to September. The leaves are simple and grow alternate or in a cluster of each other. The flowers of wild plum are white in color, fragrant and small. They bloom between February and May and typically have five petals with many stamens. Wild plum often occurs along fence rows, roadsides, and prairie streams. It performs best on well-drained sandy loam soils throughout northwest Texas and southern Oklahoma with 22 to 30 inches of annual rainfall. It is easily established from seed or root sprouts. Stratified seed can be planted in April or May. Root sprouts should be planted in

late fall, or after frost and before new leaf formation in the spring. Plantings should be planned in compact groups or motts on 2 to 3 foot centers. Rainbow Germplasm is a composite plant release from the James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center in Knox City, TX. Seed was collected and combined from native plants located in Kent, Fannin, and Wise counties in Texas.

Wild plum has many benefits as a conservation plant. It can be included in lesser prairie-chicken habitat plantings to provide resting, escape and thermal cover. It is an important plant for wildlife food and cover. The thickets provide excellent cover for large and small mammals and game birds, as well as nesting cover for song birds. The fruit ripens from June to October supplying food for deer, small mammals, and various types of birds throughout the summer and fall months. The early spring blooms provide nectar to many species of pollinators. Wild plum also provides excellent erosion control and plant diversity for surface-mined areas. It is also used in shelterbelt plantings and beautification in landscaping.



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