



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Plant Materials Program

'Lometa' Indiangrass

Sorghastrum nutans (Nash) L.

A Conservation Plant Release by USDA NRCS James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center, Knox City, TX



USDA-NRCS James E. "Bud" Smith PMC

'Lometa' Indiangrass [*Sorghastrum nutans* (L.), Nash] was released from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center in Knox City, Texas.

Description

Sorghastrum nutans (L.) Nash, Indiangrass, is a native, perennial warm season grass. Plant height ranges between 3 to 7 feet tall with the average around 4 feet. Leaves are long and narrow with a bluish-green waxy appearance. Seed stalks form in late August and September with seed maturity occurring in late October to early November. The seed head has a golden bronze to yellow color. Seed from Indiangrass is light and fluffy with small awns attached. Indiangrass can be distinguished from other native grass species by the "rifle-sight" ligule at the point where the leaf attaches to the stem. There are approximately 168,434 seeds per pound.

Source

Lometa Indiangrass was collected from a native stand east of Lometa, Texas.

Conservation Uses

Lometa has many conservational uses. It can be used singly or in mixtures for livestock forage on pastures, rangelands, and hayland. Lometa has proven to be better adapted, longer lived, and more productive than other Indiangrass varieties presently available in Texas, especially in central and south Texas. It provides excellent wildlife food and cover for deer, small mammals, and birds. Indiangrass can also be used to prevent erosion on roadsides and areas subject to wind erosion.

Area of Adaptation and Use

Lometa is adapted to most soil types in Texas in areas that receive at least 22 inches of rainfall per year. It is also adapted in areas that receive less precipitation if irrigation or runoff is available. Indiangrass is adapted to a wide range of soil textures from sand to clay.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

The full seeding rate for Lometa is 5 lbs pure live seed/acre. When planting it as a component of a seed mixture, the seeding rate should be adjusted to the desired percent of the mix. Seed should be planted ½ to ¾ inch deep.

Seedbed preparation should begin the year prior to spring planting to reduce weed problems during the first year of establishment. Work the site as necessary during the summer or early fall prior to establishment to create a firm, weed-free seedbed. Work should be completed in the fall to allow time for the soil to settle and accumulate moisture. Minimum and no-till operations should use herbicide applications to control weeds. Plantings should be well established before livestock grazing is permitted. Established stands of Lometa should not be grazed lower than 6-8 inches, depending upon the prescribed grazing system. Contact your local USDA NRCS field office for assistance in planning and applying prescribed grazing plans.

A soil test should be conducted to determine the amount of fertilizer to apply to maintain a medium soil test level. Nitrogen should not be used during the establishment year because it will encourage weed growth. Weeds may be controlled by mowing or with herbicides. Consult your local extension weed specialist for recommendations on herbicides for Indiangrass.

Seed and Plant Production

Indiangrass is harvested by either a seed stripper or direct combining.

Availability

For conservation use: Commercial seed is available from several commercial seed companies.

For seed or plant increase: Breeder seed will be maintained by the USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Center, Knox City, Texas and is available to seed growers through the Texas Foundation Seed Service in Vernon, Texas, phone number (940) 552-6226.



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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 Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov/>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/>>



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