

A Conservation Plant Released by the Natural Resources Conservation Service  
James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center, Knox City, TX

# 'Mason'

## Sandhill Lovegrass

*Eragrostis trichodes* (Nutt.) Alph. Wood



USDA-NRCS James E. "Bud" Smith PMC

'Mason' sandhill lovegrass, *Eragrostis trichodes* [(Nutt.) Alph. Wood], was released from the James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center in Knox City, Texas in 1971.

### Description

Mason sandhill lovegrass is a warm-season, native, perennial grass. The plant reaches 2½ to 5 feet in height. The plant has a high stem to leaf ratio which provides ample forage production. The flat leaves are wider than the leaves of other lovegrasses with hairs on top of the leaf sheaths. The large seedhead of sandhill lovegrass can be up to half the size of the entire plant. There are approximately 2,014,852 seeds per pound.

### Source

Mason was collected in 1957 from native stands near the city of Mason, Texas, in Mason County.

### Conservation Uses

Mason is commonly used in grazed pastures and in mixtures for rangeland seeding. It starts growth in the spring two or more weeks earlier than other warm season grasses providing early season grazing. Its forage value is excellent in the spring and early summer for all classes of livestock. The value declines slightly to "fair" to "good" through maturity, and it cures well, providing opportunity for fall and winter grazing. Sandhill lovegrass also provides good ground nesting cover for birds and small mammals. The seed is utilized by songbirds and small mammals. It can also be planted for filter strips, field borders, mine reclamation, and erosion control.

### Area of Adaptation and Use

Mason sandhill lovegrass is found on prairies, open woods, and disturbed sites within the central and southern Great Plains. It is best adapted to light, sandy soils with 18 to 35 inches of rainfall, but can also be found on heavier soils.

### Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

The full seeding rate for Mason is 1.5 pounds of pure live seed per acre. When planting this as a component of a seed mixture, the seeding rate should be adjusted to the desired percent of the mix. Seed should be planted ¼ to ½ 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. Twelve months of grazing deferment should give plants enough time to become established. Established stands of Mason should not be grazed lower than 6-8 inches, depending upon the prescribed grazing system. Contact your local U.S. Department of Agriculture-NRCS field office for assistance in planning and applying prescribed grazing plans.

Soil tests should be conducted to determine the amount of fertilizer applied to sustain a medium 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 sandhill lovegrass.

### Seed and Plant Production

Mason sandhill lovegrass is harvested with either a seed stripper or by direct combining. Average seed yield at the Knox City PMC is 190 pounds per acre.

### 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 James E. "Bud" Smith 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.



USDA-NRCS James E. "Bud" Smith PMC

*For more information, contact:*

James E. "Bud" Smith PMC  
3950 FM 1292 Suite 100  
Knox City, TX 79529  
Phone: (940) 658-3922 ext. 5  
Fax: (940) 658-3095



USDA-NRCS James E. "Bud" Smith PMC

### Citation

Release Brochure for Mason sandhill lovegrass (*Eragrostis trichodes*). USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center. Knox City, TX, 79529. Published March 2014.

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/>>

*Helping People Help the Land*

USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER