

Los Lunas Plant Materials Center

1036 Miller Rd., Los Lunas, NM 87031

Tel: (505)865-4684, <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/plant-materials/nmpmc>

2025 Activities Report



'San Juan' broadbeard
beardtongue

USDA NRCS Plant Materials Program operates 25 Plant Materials Centers (PMC) throughout the country. Each Center is strategically located to support the conservation needs in a specific geographical and ecological region. The Los Lunas Plant Materials Center (NMPMC) serves the southwest arid and semi-arid region, focusing on conducting plant materials studies for improving soil health in range and agricultural land, improving wildlife habitat, urban conservation, breeder seed releases, and technology transfer for supporting NRCS field offices and their customers. A key mission of NRCS Plant Materials Program is to develop improved conservation plants and release them for use in addressing resource concerns. PMCs around the country have released hundreds of improved cultivars and pre-varietal germplasms. PMCs continue to maintain their respective releases and have provided stock seeds or foundation materials to commercial seed producers who make improved conservation plant seed available to the market. Subsequently, the commercially produced seed is used in conservation programs

including EQIP and CRP. The Los Lunas PMC has released 41 grasses, forbs, trees, and shrubs for conservation needs in New Mexico and neighboring states. Currently, the Los Lunas PMC maintains foundation and breeder seed for 17 grasses: 'Alma' blue grama, 'Arriba' western wheatgrass, 'El Vado' spike muhly, 'Grenville' switchgrass, 'Hachita' blue grama, 'Jose' tall wheatgrass, 'Lovington' blue grama, 'Luna' pubescent wheatgrass, 'Niner sideoats grama', 'Nogal' black grama, 'Paloma' Indian ricegrass, 'Pastura' little



New stand of 'Paloma' Indian ricegrass

bluestem, ‘Redondo’ Arizona tall fescue, ‘Salado’ alkali sacaton, ‘Vaughn’ sideoats grama, ‘Viva’ galleta and ‘Windbreaker’ big sacaton. The Los Lunas PMC is currently increasing breeder seed availability of all active releases.

Training and Outreach

With new staff at the PMC, Keith White taught new technician Ian Fingado everything from maintaining equipment, harvesting seed, and cleaning it. Pictured here is Keith on an eco-weeder being pulled by Ian in the tractor cleaning up weeds in the Redondo breeder block. In addition to working on the farm, Ian Fingado assisted NM NRCS’s state soil scientist Rick Strait with a mentoring program with a local high school teaching kids about soil classification, plant identification and range health assessments.



Keith White training Ian Fingado on the eco weeder.

Partnerships



Kaitlin Hasse, Willie Sommers, Nick Goodman, Ian Fingado, and Grace Woodard

Apache Plumes, James’ buckwheat, and more to transplant and bring beneficial insects to the Los Lunas PMC. In addition to Nick, Kaitlin and Los Lunas PMC staff, and William ‘Willie’ Sommers with New Mexico State University helped get the new pollinator habitat planted. This plot can later be used in training new planners on how to conduct resource inventories and plant identification.

In collaboration with NRCS NM’s State biologist Nick Goodman, Los Lunas Plant Materials Center came together with Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation out of Santa Fe to plant a pollinator habitat. The location was a fallow field that had been farmed at one time but, due to the location, was difficult to manage. To better utilize the space, Kaitlin Haase with Xerces Society brought Skunkbush,

Nick Goodman and Grace Woodard planting pollinator habitat



Breeder Blocks

Los Lunas PMC has been transitioning old large foundation seed plots into smaller breeder seed plots. This year four releases were reestablished, ‘Luna’ pubescent wheatgrass, ‘Lovington’ blue grama, ‘Pastura’ little bluestem and ‘Paloma’ Indian ricegrass. All new plantings have been successful so far. As 2025 ends, forbs such as ‘San Juan’ broadleaf beardtongue and ‘Cedar’ Palmer’s Penstemon will be planted in the greenhouse for starting new breeder blocks in 2026 in addition to grasses such as ‘Tusas’ bottlebrush squirreltail, ‘Alma’ blue grama, and ‘Salado’ alkali sacaton.



Keith White preparing for a new breeder block

Saying Goodbye

Keith White, Biological Science Technician at NMPMC, retired after three decades of NRCS Service. Keith joined the plant materials program 20 years ago, bringing with him a strong work ethic, a deep knowledge of farming from his Georgia home, and a smile that warmed the hearts of staff, partners, and producers. While in Los Lunas, Keith contributed to conservation plant releases, riparian restoration, and deep planting techniques. We greatly miss him and wish him well in his retirement.

Publications

All release brochures can be located at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/plant-materials/cp/releases> for further information.



USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

‘Pastura’ little bluestem (R) and ‘Cedar’ Palmer’s penstemon (L)