



A Conservation Plant Released by the Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Los Lunas Plant Materials Center, Los Lunas, NM

# 'Viva'

## James' galleta

*Pleuraphis jamesii* Torr.



'Viva' James' galleta (*Pleuraphis jamesii*)

'Viva' James' galleta (*Pleuraphis jamesii* Torr.) was released in 1979 as a joint release between New Mexico State University's Los Lunas Agricultural Science Center and the USDA-NRCS Los Lunas Plant Materials Center.

### Description

Viva James' galleta, a native, warm-season, perennial grass, is dull blue-green in color and cures to a lightstraw-yellow. This rhizomatous plant is erect with stems often curving upward from a horizontal base. The hairless stems are usually 1 to 2 feet tall, and the joints are covered with long, soft hairs. The sheaths may feel rough and are slightly hairy around the leaf-blade junction. The stiff leaves are about 0.8 to 2 inches long, and 0.08 to 0.16 inches wide. The leaf edges roll inward, ending in an almost sharp, rigid point.

The flower heads (spikes) are often purplish at first and fade to almost white at maturity, and they are 1.2 to 3.9 inches long. The spikelets are 0.24 to 0.31 inches long with long hairs at the base. After the spikelets fall, the upper stem, or rachis, remains as a thin, zig-zag straw.

### Source

The Viva James' galleta seed was collected by the Soil Conservation Service in 1944 from a native stand near Newkirk, New Mexico.

### Conservation Uses

The abundance of galleta and its ability to produce considerable forage make it a very important species on many southwestern ranges. Viva James' galleta is useful for critical area soil stabilization and range revegetation in its natural range of adaptation. Viva galleta is very drought-resistant and maintains itself very well on arid ranges, where average annual precipitation may be as low as seven inches.

By genetic signatures, Winkler and Massatti (2020) suggested that Viva is a hybrid between *Hilaria jamesii* and *Hilaria mutica*, and conservation decisions on the uses of 'Viva' galleta should be made in this consideration. It should also be noted that 'Viva' galleta is well established in the adaptation range of *Hilaria jamesii*.

### Area of Adaptation and Use

Viva galleta grows well on medium to heavy, moderately saline soils. It grows from rhizomes and seed mainly in the summer after sufficient rainfall. Its drought resistance allows it to do well even in areas with only 8 inches of annual precipitation. While it is green, its forage value is good for all classes of livestock and wildlife.

Galleta is widely distributed in Colorado (except in the central and north-central parts) from elevations of 3,500 to 7,500 feet. It is most commonly found in the northern two-thirds of New Mexico at elevations of 3,500 to 7,500 feet. It is also found in western Texas, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, California, and Arizona.

### Ecological Considerations

Viva James' galleta, when placed in mixes with other adapted species, serves a need for stabilization and revegetation of not only mine spoils, but other areas such as pipeline right-of-ways, highway right-of-ways, and other disturbed sites.

### Seed and Plant Production

Viva James' galleta's tough, woody rootstocks are its surest means of reproduction. However, plants are also easily established from seed. Good stands have been established in field trials with 2 to 6 lbs. per acre of pure live seed planted in rows of 12x38 inch spacing.

If precipitation is less than 11 inches per year, supplemental water should be used during the first year of establishment. Mulching can also be helpful on disturbed, dry sites.

#### **Availability**

Foundation seed is produced by the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center. Foundation seed is available to certified growers through New Mexico State Seed Certification.

*For more information, contact:*  
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<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/nmpmc/>

#### **Citation**

Conservation Plant Release Brochure for 'Viva' James' galleta (*Pleuraphis jamesii* Torr). USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Los Lunas Plant Materials Center, Los Lunas, NM 87031. Published June 1982; revised: March 22, 2021.

#### **Reference**

Winkler and Massatti. 2020. Unexpected hybridization reveals the utility of genetics in native plant restoration. *Restoration Ecology*: 28, 1047-1052.

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 Website <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>



This is a joint release between New Mexico State University's Los Lunas Agricultural Science and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service's Los Lunas Plant Materials Center.

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