

Northern Wet-Mesic Tallgrass Prairie

Site Characteristics: This community typically occurs on level to gently sloping sites with heavier soils. Sites often have standing water present in the spring or after heavy rains. Stands of this community occur most frequently on moist to poorly drained sand to silt loam soils, although some are found on clay loams or silty clays. Stands occur on parent materials of glacial till, outwash, drift, or glacial lakeplains

Vegetation Characteristics: The vegetation is dominated by a dense layer of tall grasses, such as *Big Bluestem* and *Switchgrass*, with associates of *Canada Bluejoint*, *Slimstem Reedgrass*, and *Prairie Cordgrass*. *Mat Mubly* may be a diagnostic, less dominant species of the northern tallgrass prairie. The dominant lifeforms in stands of this alliance are tall grasses, although forbs can be abundant as well (>60% cover). Trees and shrubs can occur as scattered individuals or clumps.

Range: Northwestern Iowa

Conservation Status: G3 - Vulnerable

Management Considerations: Fires were a common occurrence in stands of this alliance before effective fire-suppression activities. In the prolonged absence of fire, woody species usually invade and can become abundant.



Iowa NRCS Plant Community Description

This community description is a compilation of the Community Association and its over-riding Community Alliance descriptions as provided by NatureServe (www.natureserve.org/explorer). Where necessary, community descriptions were adapted as recommended by Iowa plant community experts.

6/13/2013

NORTHERN WET-MESIC TALLGRASS PRAIRIE						
SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	STRATA	FUNCTIONAL GROUP	IA CofC	SEEDS /LB	STATE STATUS
<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Big bluestem	Herbaceous Layer, Dominant	P-GRASS, WARM SEASON	4	160000	
<i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i>	Bluejoint	Herbaceous Layer, Dominant	P-GRASS, COOL SEASON	5	4480000	
<i>Calamagrostis stricta</i>	Northern reed grass	Herbaceous Layer, Dominant	P-GRASS, COOL SEASON	7	2302499	
<i>Carex spp.</i>	True Sedges	Herbaceous Layer	SEDGE, COOL SEASON			
<i>Elymus canadensis</i>	Canada wild rye	Herbaceous Layer	P-GRASS, COOL SEASON	5	83200	
<i>Helianthus grosseserratus</i>	Saw-tooth sunflower	Herbaceous Layer	P-FORB	4	240000	
<i>Lysimachia quadriflora</i>	Narrow-leaved loosestrife	Herbaceous Layer	P-FORB	7	1440000	
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switchgrass	Herbaceous Layer, Dominant	P-GRASS, WARM SEASON	5	224000	
<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>	Western wheatgrass	Herbaceous Layer	P-GRASS, COOL SEASON	2	115008	
<i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i>	Common mountain mint	Herbaceous Layer	P-FORB	4	3520000	
<i>Ratibida columnifera</i>	Long-headed coneflower	Herbaceous Layer	P-FORB	4	320000	
<i>Ratibida pinnata</i>	Gray-headed coneflower	Herbaceous Layer	P-FORB	4	672000	
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little bluestem	Herbaceous Layer	P-GRASS, WARM SEASON	5	240000	
<i>Spartina pectinata</i>	Slough grass, cord grass	Herbaceous Layer, Dominant	P-GRASS, WARM SEASON	4	105600	
<i>Thalictrum dasycarpum</i>	Purple meadow-rue	Herbaceous Layer	P-FORB	4	176000	
<i>Zizia aurea</i>	Golden Alexander's	Herbaceous Layer	P-FORB	6	176000	

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