

## **Native grass selections for landscape use in Florida**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Several species of native grasses are widely used in public and private landscapes in the southeastern U.S. Most of the materials currently available in the nursery trade are selections from native stands that have not undergone comparative evaluations and are therefore marketed solely by species name (i.e., without cultivar or variety names). The USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Plant Materials Center (PMC) in Brooksville, Florida has made numerous collections of grasses native to Florida and evaluated these plants for their potential to solve conservation problems, such as to restore grazing lands and natural areas, improve water quality, and provide wildlife habitat. Occasionally, some individual plants (accessions) in the assembled collections possess atypical phenotypic features (e.g., foliage color, flower color, growth habit, etc.) that create opportunities to utilize them as ornamentals. Releasing these selections for production by the industry creates a potential niche market for smaller nursery producers. Some examples of ornamental grass releases resulting from the evaluation program at the Brooksville PMC include Morning Mist germplasm hairawn muhly (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*), which has white flowers as opposed to the normal pink flowers of the species, and Osceola Blue germplasm lopsided indiagrass (*Sorghastrum secundum*), which has a more pronounced bluish tint to the foliage and culms.