



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Plant Materials Program

Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass

Sorghastrum nutans L. Nash

A Conservation Plant Release by USDA NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center, East Lansing, MI



Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiagrass

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources released a source identified ecotype of indiagrass in September, 2001 for the Great Lakes region.

Description

Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiagrass is a composite of several indiagrass collections and has features consistent with the species. It is a perennial, warm season bunch grass with short rhizomes and erect stems that reach a height of six feet. Leaf blades are folded in the bud shoot. Sheaths are round, open and may be hairy at the base. The prominent, membranous, clawlike ligules resemble a rifle sight. Indiangrass has a narrow plume like seedhead that turns golden at maturity.

Source

Seed was collected from native stands (as designated by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division) of indiagrass within the southern half of Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

Conservation Uses

The anticipated uses of Southlow Michigan Germplasm Little bluestem include providing food/cover for wildlife, increasing species diversity, controlling erosion and restoring native plant environments. Indiangrass attracts insects and provides seed that is used as a food source by songbirds, game birds and small mammals. Many wildlife species also utilize indiagrass for nesting and winter cover. As this is a native plant species and composite, it will be useful as a component in the restoration and diversification of native habitats, particularly Southern Michigan, its source of origin. Indiangrass may also be useful in combination with other warm and cool season grasses for erosion control because of its massive root system.

Area of Adaptation and Use

This species is found in dry to moist open areas throughout much of the United States, and is a major component of tall and mixed grass prairies.

Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiagrass' primary utilization area is expected to be within the Great Lakes region.

Plantings

Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiagrass can be established by seed. Indiangrass seeds often have 'fluffy' appendages that make the seed difficult to plant using a standard grain drill. Using a grain drill with a fluffy seed box is recommended for mechanical planting. Seed can be broadcast and cultipacked as well. Seeding rate for little bluestem is 2-5 lb. PLS/acre. Increase seeding rate by 10% if broadcast seeding methods are used. Care should be taken to limit seeding depth to no more than 1/3" in most soils, and ensure adequate seed to soil contact. Weed control during establishment is critical. Mowing and use of registered herbicides will aid in weed control. Always read and follow herbicide label directions.



A field of Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiangrass

Ecological Considerations

No insect or disease problems have been observed on Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiangrass...

Seed and Plant Production

Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiangrass produces seed annually. Seed can be harvested mechanically with a combine harvester or a brush “stripper”. Timing is critical as mature seed can fall off of the plant. Seed cleaning can be done; using a fanning mill. Using a debearder to remove the fluffy appendages will aid in seed cleaning and handling.

Availability

Seed/plant stock of Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiangrass will be maintained cooperatively by the USDA NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and made available to qualified parties for source increase purposes.



Field of Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiangrass

For more information, contact:
Rose Lake Plant Materials Center
7472 Stoll Rd., East Lansing, MI 48823
Phone: 517-641-6300
Fax: 517-641-4421

Citation *[Insert correct information below]*

Release Brochure for Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiangrass, *Sorghastrum nutans*. USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rose Lake Plant Materials Center, East Lansing, MI 48823 Published *September, 2001*, Revised *January 2012*.

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/>>



Mature Southlow Michigan Germplasm indiangrass

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