

# Seed News



**Plant Materials Center, Bismarck, North Dakota**

February 2011

by Dwight Tober, Plant Materials Specialist

## NRCS State Web Sites

Looking for information about the new conservation programs? How many acres are being enrolled? What grasses and forb species are being recommended in each state? What are the planting guidelines? The fastest way to find that information is to browse each state's NRCS home page on the web (<http://www.nd.nrcs.usda.gov>). Use the state's abbreviation where you want to search. One of the tabs at the top of each state's website is **Programs**. This link will provide you a directory to all the programs administered or technically supported by the NRCS. A Program Contacts Directory is also provided if you would like to visit with someone personally. The home page also provides feature information on the latest program signup periods and new funding initiatives. An information bar found on the right side will direct you to additional links. Click on **Plants** and you will find the newest and the latest on the Plant Materials Program.

### Who We Are

The Bismarck Plant Materials Center (PMC) is one of 27 PMCs operated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The Bismarck PMC serves the States of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. It is the mission of the plant materials program to develop plant materials and plant science technology for the conservation of our natural resources. The Bismarck PMC was established in 1954 as part of the Soil Conservation Service, now Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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## Maximilian Sunflower - A Preferred Wildlife Species

Flowers for pollinators, seed for birds, winter cover for pheasants, and browse for deer – Maximilian sunflower is a native forb for all seasons. **Medicine Creek Germplasm** is the recommended release for the Northern Great Plains and Upper Midwest. It is a local plant collection from central South Dakota and is well adapted throughout the region. Beware of southern seed sources that will not bloom in our northern climates. Even though they tend to survive our winters, without the flowers much of the wildlife benefits are lost. Large, late maturing Maximilian sunflowers had been observed in CRP plantings in previous years. Follow-up showed the variety originated in Oklahoma. Varieties on the market from Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas are not recommended in our region.

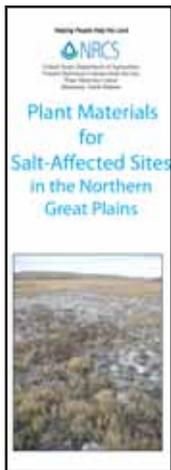


The strongly rhizomatous rootstocks form patches that provide excellent escape cover for wildlife. Even though the species prefers wetter sites along grassland drainages and prairie potholes, it will also do well on fertile uplands in good rainfall years. On these sites, it increases or decreases depending on rainfall conditions. It is a favorite forage of wildlife and livestock.

This showy sunflower is also cultivated as an ornamental. Caution is advised in small areas as it will spread by seed and rhizomes. Seed has a high amount of dormancy. Dormant seed of 50 percent or more is not unusual. Dormant seeding is recommended.

## Plant Materials for Salt-Affected Sites

Plant performance can vary dramatically on sites affected by increases in salt concentrations. Matching the salt tolerance of the species to the conditions at the site is an important consideration in the success of any new plantings. Generally cool-season grasses are more salt-tolerant than forb, legume, tree, or shrub species. The best time to seed salt-affected soils is usually late fall (dormant seeding) when the seeded crop can benefit from the diluting effect of spring moisture on the surface salts. Residue or mulch will help reduce surface evaporation and protect emerging seedlings.



Tall wheatgrass, slender wheatgrass, and western wheatgrass are the most frequently used strongly tolerant species. New varieties of green wheatgrass (NewHy, AC Saltlander) have been performing well in trials. Switchgrass and prairie cordgrass are the only warm-season species recommended as being moderately tolerant or moderately sensitive. Alfalfa and sweetclover are considered moderately sensitive. There is little information available on the salt tolerance of native forbs and legumes. However, limited references and personal experience have shown less sensitivity for blanketflower, yarrow, Maximilian sunflower, stiff sunflower, Lewis flax, and Canada milkvetch.

Identifying the problem and long-term resource management of the area is critical for overall success of the planting. For additional information, a brochure is available from the Bismarck PMC. It provides electrical conductivity (EC) tolerance ratings for grasses, native forbs and legumes, and trees and shrubs.

Plant Materials for Salt-Affected Sites in the Northern Great Plains can be downloaded from the Bismarck PMC web site at <http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/pubs/ndpmctn7094.pdf>.

## Foundation Seed Order Information 2011

Following are prices of Foundation and Select Class grass and forb seed produced by the Bismarck PMC. This seed is for sale through NDSU Foundation Seedstocks to commercial seed growers for the sole purpose of certified seed production. To order seed, contact Dwight Tober by email at [Dwight.Tober@nd.usda.gov](mailto:Dwight.Tober@nd.usda.gov) or call (701) 530-2075. All seed prices are subject to change. Once ordered, a confirmation letter will be sent from the PMC and billing will be sent from NDSU Foundation Seedstocks. Payment in full to NDSU Foundation Seedstocks must be received before seed shipment. If payment is not received within 30 days, the order will be cancelled. Prices are based on a Pure Live Seed (PLS) pound. Shipping charges (in the U.S.) will be \$1.00/PLS pound.

RELEASES	CLASS*	COMMON NAME	COST/PLS LB
Native Warm-Season Grasses			U. S. Dollars
Badlands ecotype	Select (G2)	little bluestem	16.00
Itasca germplasm	Select (G2)	little bluestem	16.00
Bad River ecotype	Select (G2)	blue grama	sold out
Bison	Foundation	big bluestem	10.00
Bonilla	Foundation	big bluestem	10.00
Dacotah	Foundation	switchgrass	6.00
Forestburg	Foundation	switchgrass	6.00
Pierre	Foundation	sideoats grama	14.00
Red River germplasm	Select (G1)	prairie cordgrass	80.00
Tomahawk	Foundation	Indiangrass	12.00
Native Cool-Season Grasses			
Lodorm	Foundation	green needlegrass	sold out
Mandan	Foundation	Canada wildrye	8.00
Rodan	Foundation	western wheatgrass	6.00
Introduced Grasses			
Mankota	Foundation	Russian wildrye	8.00
Nordan	Foundation	crested wheatgrass	6.00
Manifest	Foundation	intermediate wheatgrass	4.00
Manska	Foundation	pubescent wheatgrass	4.00
Reliant	Foundation	intermediate wheatgrass	4.00
Native Forbs/Legumes			
Bismarck germplasm	Select (G1)	narrow-leaved purple coneflower	sold out
Bismarck germplasm	Select (G1)	purple prairieclover	30.00
Bismarck germplasm	Select (G1)	stiff sunflower	250.00
Medicine Creek germplasm	Select (G1)	Maximilian sunflower	50.00

\*Generation number for select class materials is shown in parentheses (G1 = generation 1).