

SUTHER PRAIRIE GERMPLASM

INDIANGRASS *Sorghastrum nutans*

Suther Prairie germplasm Indiangrass was released in July 2002 by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Cape May Plant Materials Center (PMC) in Cape May Courthouse, New Jersey. It is recognized as a source identified release.

Suther Prairie germplasm Indiangrass was collected from a wet prairie 27 miles Northeast of Charlotte in Cabarrus County, North Carolina. Cabarrus County is in the Piedmont of North Carolina in plant hardiness zone 7a and receives 45-55 inches of precipitation per year. The average temperature in July is 79° F and 42° F in January.

Description

Indiangrass is a native, perennial, warm-season bunchgrass and a major component of the tall grass vegetation which once dominated the prairies of the central and eastern United States. Indiangrass grows 3 to 5 feet tall. Even as a young plant, it can be distinguished from other native grass species by the “rifle-sight” ligule at the point where the leaf attaches to the stem. The leaf blade also narrows at the point of attachment. The seed head is a single, narrow, plume-like panicle of a golden brown color. The seed is light and fluffy with small awns attached. Indiangrass is the state grass of Oklahoma.



Uses

Suther Prairie germplasm Indiangrass can be used in several conservation practices, such as: critical area stabilization, conservation cover, field border, range seeding and pasture and hayland planting. Fertilization is recommended to improve productivity and forage quality. Plants should be grazed or hayed in the leafy stage before seed head emergence.



Grass seed drills equipped with specialized seed boxes are recommended for planting fluffy or “trashy” seed such as Indiangrass.

Adaptation

Suther Prairie germplasm Indiangrass is recommended for planting throughout the southern Piedmont and upper Coastal Plain areas of the eastern United States.