



NRCS Species for Plant Collections 2008

Virginia Wildrye

Scientific Name: *Elymus virginicus* L.
Common Name: Virginia Wildrye

Morphological Characteristics:

Habit- native cool season perennial grass reaching 60-120 cm tall; flowers April to June; reproduces by seed

Leaves- thin and flat, glabrous, scabrous or minutely pubescent, 5-15 mm broad; ligule a minute truncate membrane; sheaths glabrous

Inflorescence- a single spike

Fruit- caryopsis

Habitat and Range: occasional in all regions of Texas except the High Plains and Trans Pecos, but most common in the eastern portion. Occurs along shaded banks, fence rows, and open woodlands.



Conservation Use:

Why collect this plant? Texas Plant Materials Centers have identified this plant as having potential benefits to the following conservation practice standards: 512 Pasture & Hayland Planting; 550 Range Planting; 393 Filter Strip; and 390 Riparian Herbaceous Cover. Your assistance in collecting this plant helps support the NRCS conservation practice standards which are employed daily to conserve the natural resources of Texas!

Centers Requesting Seed:

E. Kika de la Garza PMC



How to Collect Seed

1. Identify native plant stands in your area. You can go to the following websites for helpful photos <http://plants.usda.gov> or <http://www.noble.org/imagegallery/index.html> or www.wildflower.org
2. Determine if seed is mature. Mature seed is typically dry and will easily separate from the seed head.
3. Hand strip mature seed by grasping the bottom of the seed head then gently pulling away from the base of the plant. Deposit seed in a brown paper sack. Collect seed from a minimum of 30 to 50 plants.
4. Label each collection as it is made so collections do not get mixed up. Information required includes: Collector's name, number of plants collected, location (parish, city, highway, GPS coordinates), site description (soil type, slope, plants growing in association).
5. Complete NRCS-ECS-580; Plant Collection Information Form and mail with collected seeds to the NRCS Plant Materials Center requesting the species.

E. Kika de la Garza Plant Materials Center
3409 N FM 1355
Kingsville, TX 78363

Helpful Tips

Look for superior plants that display differences in color, height, or forage abundance and record observations. Differences in growing site or location should be made into separate collections if they are separated by more than 1 mile between sites.

This species is easily confused with Canada wildrye. Virginia wildrye has glumes that strongly bow out at the base. Canada wildrye has glumes not or only slightly bowed. Virginia wildrye generally has a more compacted, stiff seedhead, with short awns, giving it an appearance similar to wheat. Canada wildrye tends to have a longer, nodding seedhead, with more space between the spikelets, and long awns.

Other Photos:

