



Plant Guide

BIG SACATON

(FALFURRIAS SELECT GERMPASM)

Kika de la Garza PMC
Kingsville, Texas

MAY 1998

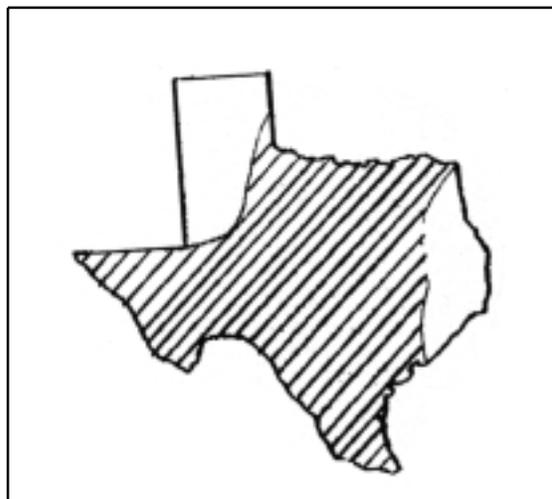
INTRODUCTION

Big sacaton (*Sporobolus wrightii*) is a native, warm-season grass that forms dense clumps. It is a coarse, upright bunch grass that can grow from 3 to 8 feet tall. This selected collection came from Falfurrias, TX. It was evaluated at both the Kika de la Garza Plant Materials Center and the Knox City Plant Materials Center.

The "Falfurrias" collection of big sacaton was chosen because of its ability to produce abundant forage, especially on droughty, alkaline and saline sites. It also produces nutritious, green forage throughout the winter months in South Texas.

ADAPTED AREA

Big sacaton is primarily adapted to heavier textured soils in areas west of the Piney woods. Big sacaton is tolerant of highly alkaline and saline soil. It can tolerate poorly drained soils



and seasonally flooded areas. It also is adapted to dry, rocky draws of West Texas.

USES

Big sacaton may be used in pure stands or as part of a rangeland seeding mix for the highly alkaline soils of western Texas. It is useful for revegetating saline soils throughout south and west Texas. It performs well as a grass hedge terrace or windstrip for erosion control. It helps stabilize watershed structures, stream banks and flood plain areas. It also is useful for wildlife cover.

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ESTABLISHMENT

Seedbed preparation should begin well in advance of planting. Planting can be scheduled for early spring or where there is minimal cool-season weeds, it can also be planted in the fall.

Establish a clean, weed-free seedbed by either tillage or herbicides. Prior to planting, the site should be firm and have accumulated soil moisture.

Big sacaton seed can be drilled or broadcast. Seed should be planted at 1/8 to 1/4 inch depth. It is better to plant too shallow than too deep. A seeding rate of 1/2 to 1 pound of pure live seed per acre is recommended. Plants can also be grown in small paper containers and then transplanted for establishment of grass hedges and wind barriers. On saline soils, weed-free mulch can be used to improve establishment. Establishment is highly dependent on good rainfall or irrigation.

Soil analysis should be performed prior to planting to determine salinity levels and necessary levels of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Nitrogen should not be applied until the stand is established. Evaluate the stand after 60 days. If 1 plant per square foot is present then the planting has been successful.

MANAGEMENT

Big sacaton should not be grazed the first year. After stands are established, either continuous or rotational grazing can be used. It is recommended that a minimum 12 inch stubble height be maintained under continuous grazing. For rotational grazing, forage height should be utilized between 8 to 16 inches. Big sacaton will benefit from an annual mowing at a 18-24" height when used as a grass hedge or wind barrier.

WHERE TO GET HELP

Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) office for more information. Look in the telephone book under "United States Government". The NRCS will be listed under the sub heading "Department of Agriculture".

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