

Interspecific Competition Along South Texas Roadsides

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Kleberg bluestem was introduced into Texas in the 1930's as a forage grass and has since been used for erosion control along roadsides. Interest in this exotic grass initially arose due to its perseverance under heavy grazing pressures, and ability to establish rapidly with minimal resource inputs. These same characteristics make Kleberg bluestem an aggressive species, allowing it to infest and threaten native ecosystems.

Interspecific competition occurs between 2 or more species that compete for some limiting resource. This competition in return negatively impacts other species by reducing population sizes and/or growth rates. The focus of this study will be to determine patterns of interspecific competition between native windmillgrasses (WMG) and Kleberg bluestem along south Texas roadsides.

Study sites are located in Kleberg, Jim Wells, and Live Oak counties. The Daubenmire method for estimating canopy cover will be used to determine percent canopy cover of WMG and Kleberg bluestem. The Daubenmire frame will be placed along the edge of the road at 10 locations at each study site and data will be recorded in 1 foot increments going away from the road's edge for 10 feet.

Data will be collected during October 2006 and 2007. Established WMG stands with inflorescences are most noticeable in October. Data from both years will be analyzed to detect if any interspecific competition pattern occurs from one year to the next.

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