

Blue Grama

- ◆ Warm season tufted perennial grass
- ◆ Grows on a wide range of soils
- ◆ Well adapted to clay & upland areas
- ◆ Demonstrates good drought, fair salinity and moderate alkalinity tolerance
- ◆ Excellent forage for all classes of livestock and wildlife
- ◆ May produce 2 or 3 crops of seed
- ◆ Mature height can be up to 10-20 inches

Seeding Rate:

8-10 PLS lbs/Acre
April 1—May 15



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Blue grama

DESCRIPTION

Blue grama is a warm season tufted perennial grass. It is native to the short and tall grass prairies, and makes up 75 % - 90% of the grasses found there. The prairies lie in central North America. Cold arctic air currents blow in from the polar regions in the winter. Summers are hot and dry because the prairies lie in the middle of the continent, and don't get moisture from oceans. Blue grama can grow up to 18 inches tall. It grows as a bunch grass, forming open sod mats. As it matures and is grazed on by animals, the bunches grow together forming a thick sod. Blue grama is an important prairie grass because its dense, shallow root mass holds down the soil and keeps it from blowing away. Because the root system is shallow, it can quickly absorb any rain that might fall.

APPLICATION

Blue grama likes to grow in full sun with well-drained good soil, and can stand drought, heat, cold and mowing. Although it doesn't like shade, it can grow in open forests. People use it instead of regular grass where there are dry areas, for grazing animals, and to control erosion. Some people use the flowers in dried flower arrangements and the plant is also used in rock gardens.

USES

Blue grama is used for erosion control, browsing and as a decorative plant.

SEEDING

Rates: 8-10 PLS lbs/Acre. on new seeding.

Depth: Sow at no more than 1/2 inch in depth. Emerging seedlings lack the strength to push through too much overlying soil. More seed has been lost to poor planting practices than anything else; this is especially true of seed depth.

CULTURAL PRACTICES

Soil Preparation: For the best conservation practice, no-till the seed into the stubble of a previous crop or the existing stand of another species that has been successfully eradicated. Pay close attention to previous land use practices. If a row crop has been planted for many years in succession a herbicide carryover is possible. If you feel you must plow up the site before planting, prepare your seedbed like you would for any other crop. The seedbeds need to be firm, not fluffy, so the seed will not be planted at an inappropriate depth. Use a cultipacker to firm your seedbed or some other type of roller that will create a smooth planting area that is not too hard.

pH: Blue Grama will tolerate soils that are low in nutrients better than acidic conditions.

NPK requirement: We do not recommend the use of fertilizer the first year, at least not nitrogen. Moderate levels of phosphorus and potassium are beneficial, especially for root establishment, which is a primary activity of the plant the first year. Use a soil test to help you decide that rate. Fertilizer may be applied the second year to enhance vigor and production of forage. It is not necessary to fertilize at all, but stand strength may be compromised without it.

Weed Control: We recommend a controlled burn every 1-3 years if possible. If not, then a mowing pattern should be established in order to control woody species invasion and prevent thatch build up. If you mow, mow no lower than 8 inches and no later than August 1.

Grazing: Rotational grazing or flash grazing is another good management tool. Care should be taken to prevent the livestock from grazing the warm season grass to a level that would not rebound after grazing. Use 6 inches as your stopping point and a re-growth of 12 inches.

IDENTIFICATION

Clum: Erect, solid, round, 6-20 inches tall, slender, smooth, often bent abruptly below.

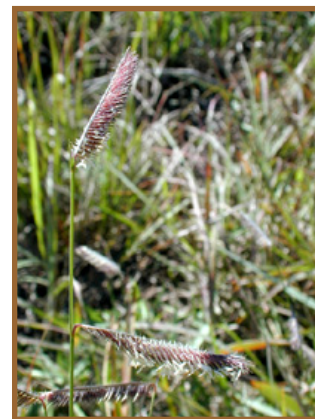
Blades: Flat, involute or revolute, 1-7 inches long, very narrow, tapering, pubescent to scabrous above, glabrous to slightly scabrous below.

Sheath: Shorter than the internodes, smooth to sparsely pilose, especially on the margins near the ligule.

Ligule: Very short, with ciliate hair.

Inflorescence: A panicle of 1-3 branches that are .5 to 1.5 inches long and often strongly curved. The rachis does not project beyond the spikelet-bearing portion of the branch.

Spikelets: Numerous, (40-90), crowded, and .2 inches long, on short minutely pubescent pedicels. The fertile lemma has 1 to 3 awns. One perfect floret per spikelet, i.e. it has both stamens and pistil.



Area of Adaptation

