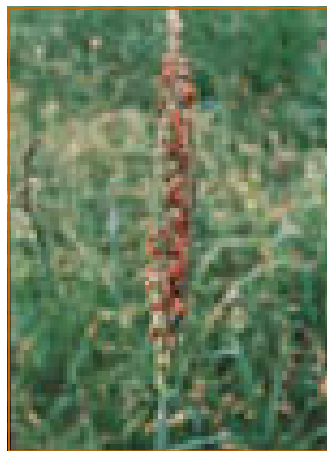


# Eastern Gamagrass

- ◆ Tall growing perennial clump grass
- ◆ Begins spring growth early
- ◆ Grows best in low areas
- ◆ Highly palatable by cattle
- ◆ Fairly flood tolerant
- ◆ ‘GRANDDAD’ of Eastern US

8-10 PLS lbs/Acre Alone  
2-3 PLS lbs/Acre in Mix

Planting Date: April 1—May 1



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# Eastern Gamagrass

## DESCRIPTION

Eastern Gamagrass is a native, warm-season, perennial tall grass. The grass grows in large clumps from 1-4 feet in diameter, that spread by thick, knotty rhizomes and from seeds. The plant itself will grow to heights of 3-9 feet. Nicknamed the “granddad” of the grasses of the eastern United States, Eastern Gamagrass has most often been found on a variety of soils in low areas. Because it is highly palatable to livestock, more growers are including Eastern Gamagrass in mixtures with other warm-season grasses or are planting it in pure stands for hay production.

## APPLICATION

The plant will adapt to fine, medium and coarse soil textures and will handle damp situations well. However, it will not tolerate inundation for more than a few days, nor will it grow in a meadow that maintains a “sloppy” condition the majority of the time. It will tolerate up to 60 inches a year of precipitation, requires at least 140 frost free days and will tolerate temperatures as low as -23° F.

## USES

Eastern Gamagrass blooms in early summer with the fruiting period beginning in mid-summer. The gamagrass seed is quite large and tough. Only 7400 seeds are found in 1 pound. The grass does not establish quickly and those wanting to use the planting for grazing or forage must wait until at least the second growing season and sometimes the third before initiating heavy use.

## SEEDING

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

**Depth:** A planting depth of 1 inch is recommended. The suggested method of planting is a corn row planter.

## 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:** A recommended minimum pH is 5.5; a maximum pH is 7.5.

**NPK requirement:** This plant has a fairly high fertility requirement, especially of lime, phosphorous and potassium. Use nitrogen only after the stand is established and use a soil test for guidance.

**Weed Control:** Weed control is achieved by cultivation of the field if planted in rows. A sparse planting of a nurse crop that can be harvested for hay when in the boot stage will control some weeds. After the first year, the stand should be able to compete with weeds without any other management than burning.

**Grazing:** Grazing of Eastern Gamagrass is a major management tool, but care must be taken to prohibit the over grazing of the stand. A flash grazing program that takes the animals off the stand when grazed to 8 inches will help maintain long term vigor. Usage should be stopped entirely 30 days before the first killing frost.

## IDENTIFICATION

**Clum:** Erect to geniculate below, solid, 4-8 feet tall, glabrous, slightly flattened at the purplish base, growing in large clumps.

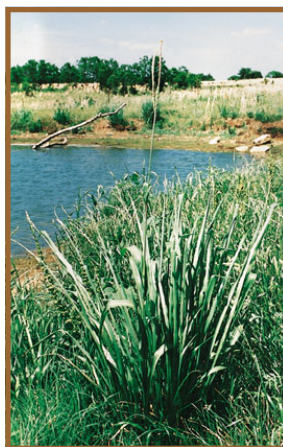
**Blades:** Flat, 12-30 inches long, .5—1.25 inch wide, glabrous or sometimes pubescent on the upper surface near the ligule, scabrous margins, long-acuminate, with a prominent midrib.

**Sheath:** Shorter than the internodes, glabrous, sometimes with pubescence toward the top.

**Ligule:** A short ring of hairs, truncate.

**Inflorescence:** Panicle, 5-10 inches long, composed of 1-4 racemose branches.

**Spikelets:** Unisexual—there are staminate (male) and pistillate (female) spikelets on the same plant. The staminate spikelets occur in pairs at the terminal end of the racemose branches. The pairs are in two rows on one side of the flattened rachis. The solitary pistillate spikelets are oval, hard, embedded in the branch, and occur toward the lower one-fourth of the inflorescence branches. At maturity, the pistillate part of the inflorescence breaks into bead-like single spikelet segments, and the staminate spikelets often break apart. There are no awns.



## Area of Adaptation

