

Native Warm Season Grasses Identification Guide

Figure 1. Eastern Gamagrass
Tripsacum dactyloides L.

Flowering Period: May-September

Growth Form: Stout, perennial clump grass with thick rhizomes; related to corn.

Field Marks: Seed head multi-pronged, coarse, and somewhat rigid.

Soil Type/Wetness: Well-drained to somewhat wet soils of moderate fertility.

Shade Tolerance: Intolerant

Height: Up to 8 feet tall (usually 5-6 feet).



Figure 2. Switchgrass *Panicum virgatum* L.

Flowering Period: June-September

Growth Form: Perennial bunch grass with branching rhizomes.

Field Marks: Tuft of hairs in leaf axil next to stem; panicle type of seed head

Soil Type/Wetness: Tolerant of various fertility and moisture levels, depending on variety.

Shade Tolerance: Intolerant

Height: Up to 7 feet tall (usually 5-6 feet)



Figure 3. Big Bluestem
Andropogon gerardii Vitman

Flowering Period: June-September

Growth Form: Tufted, perennial clump grass from stout rhizomes.

Field Marks: Seed head multi-pronged, bluish-gray, and soft, fuzzy, & hairy; scattered hairs on lower half of leaves near stem.

Soil Type/Wetness: Tolerant of various fertility and moisture levels.

Shade Tolerance: Intolerant

Height: Typically 6-8 feet tall.

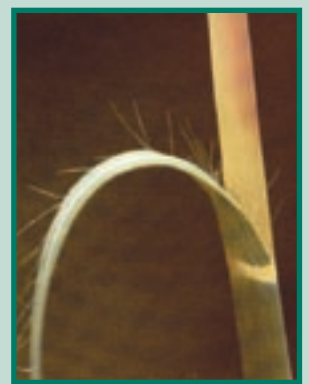


Figure 4. Indiangrass *Sorghastrum nutans* L.



Flowering Period: July-October

Growth Form: Coarse, perennial clump grass with scaly rhizomes.

Field Marks: Leaf axil has structure resembling rifle sight; seed head often has yellowish tinge.

Soil Type/Wetness: Tolerant of various fertility and moisture levels.

Shade Tolerance: Intolerant

Height: Typically 6-8 feet tall.

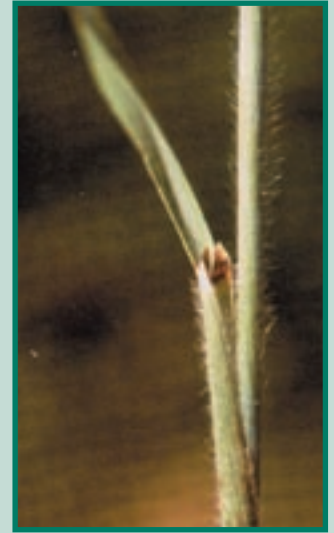


Figure 5. Little Bluestem

Schizachyrium scoparium (Michx.) Nash

Flowering Period: July-October

Growth Form: Coarse, perennial clump grass.

Field Marks: Seed heads naked (unlike broom sedge); plume bluish-green, turning orange in fall.

Soil Type/Wetness: Tolerant of poor, dry soils; also suitable for well-drained, fertile soils.

Shade Tolerance: Intolerant

Height: Up to 5 feet tall (usually about 1 1/2 – 3 feet).

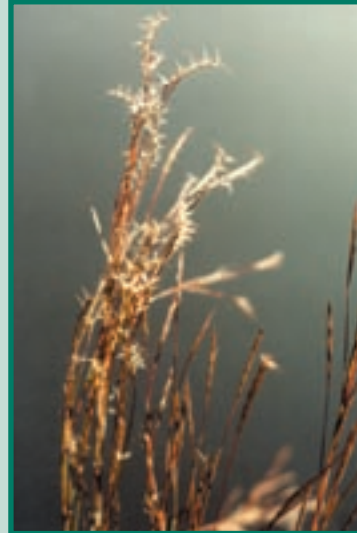


Figure 6. Side-oats Grama

Bouteloua curtipendula (Michx.) Torr.



Flowering Period: July-October

Growth Form: Coarse, perennial clump grass.

Field Marks: Seeds only on one side of head; plume usually bluish-gray, with purple tint.

Soil Type/Wetness: Well-drained soils of moderate fertility.

Shade Tolerance: Intolerant

Height: Up to 3 feet tall (usually about 1 1/2 feet).

