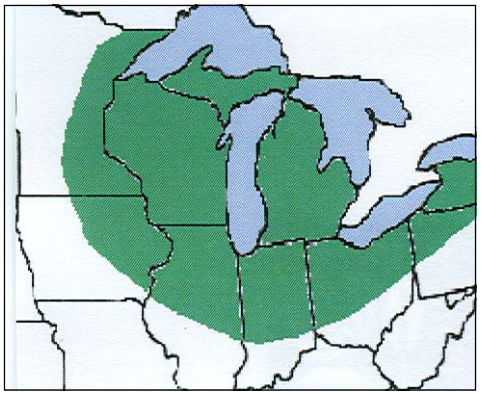
Anticipated Area of Adaptation

This species is found in dry open areas throughout much of the United States, and is a major component of tall and mixed grass prairies. Its primary utilization area is expected to be the southern Great Lakes area.



Availability of Plant Materials

Seed/plant stock of Southlow Michigan Germplasm little bluestem will be maintained cooperatively by the USDA-NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and made available to commercial growers.

To request seed/plant stock or further information contact the Plant Materials Specialist at the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center.

For More Information

Visit our Plant Materials website at

http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov to find more information on using plants to solve conservation problems.

USDA-NRCS

Rose Lake Plant Materials Center

7472 Stoll Road

East Lansing, MI 48823

Phone (517) 641-6300

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Plant Materials Specialist

(517) 641-7831

Plant Solutions for Conservation Needs

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United States Department of Agriculture
NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service
Plant Materials Program

Southlow Michigan Germplasm Little bluestem

A source-identified conservation plant

Released by

Rose Lake Plant Materials Center

East Lansing, Michigan

Southlow Michigan germplasm little bluestem

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD), and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) announce the release of a source identified ecotype of little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium* (Michx.) Nash) for the Great Lakes region.

As a source identified release, this plant will be referred to as **Southlow Michigan Germplasm little bluestem** to document its original collection location in the southern Lower Peninsula of Michigan. Southlow Michigan Germplasm little bluestem is released as a source identified type of certified seed (natural track). It is a composite release that has been assigned the NRCS accession number 9084511.

This alternative release procedure is justified because sources and supplies of Michigan ecotype little bluestem are very limited and unable to meet the demand for this product. Propagation material of this ecotype is needed for ecosystem restoration and enhancement. The potential for immediate use is extremely high.

Collection Site

Seed was collected from native stands (as designated by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division) of little bluestem within the southern half of Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

Ecotype Description

Southlow Michigan Germplasm little bluestem is a composite of several little bluestem collections and has features consistent with the species. It is a perennial, warm season bunch grass that grows from two to four feet tall. It has a dense, fibrous root system and flat, narrow basal stems. Sheaths are purplish at the base; ligules are small and membranous. Leaves are slightly folded and become reddish-brown at maturity. The white, tufted seedheads are born in a raceme.

Eological Considerations and Evaluations

This little bluestem is native Michigan plant materials that has undergone no purposeful selection; therefore it should not differ in rate of spread, seed production, vigor, nor behavior from naturally occurring little bluestem in this area. Southlow Michigan Germplasm little bluestem has been through all required environmental evaluations.

Anticipated Conservation Use

The anticipated uses of this little bluestem include providing food/cover for wildlife, increasing species diversity, controlling erosion and restoring native plant environments. Little bluestem attracts insects and provides seeds that are used as food sources by songbirds, game birds and small mammals. Many wildlife species also utilize little bluestem for nesting and winter cover. As this is a native plant species and composite it will be useful as a component in the restoration and diversification of native habitat, particularly Southern Michigan, its source of origin. Little bluestem may also be useful in combination with other warm and cool season grasses for erosion control because of its massive root system.