United States Department of Agriculture

A Conservation Plant Release by the Natural Resources Conservation Service
Rose Lake Plant Materials Center, East Lansing, MI

Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass

Sorghastrum nutans (L.) Nash

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Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass was released as a source-identified ecotype by the USDA-NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center (PMC), the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in 2001.

Description
Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass has features consistent with the species. It is a perennial, warm-season bunchgrass with short rhizomes and erect stems that reach a height of six feet. Leaf blades are folded in the bud shoot. Sheaths are round, open, and may be hairy at the base. The prominent, membranous, claw-like ligules resemble a rifle sight. Indiangrass has a narrow plume-like seedhead that turns golden at maturity.

Source
Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass is a multi-origin native germplasm with Generation 0 seed assembled from 22 native stands (as designated by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division) in the southern half of Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

Conservation Uses
Michigan NRCS technical specialists have determined that Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass is useful or potentially useful with these Conservation Practice Standards:

Conservation Cover (327)
Contour Buffer Strips (332)
Critical Area Planting (342)
Cross Wind Trap Strips (589C)
Early Successional Habitat Development/Management (647)
Field Border (386)
Filter Strip (393)
Forage and Biomass Planting (512)
Hedgerow Planting (422)
Herbaceous Wind Barriers (603)
Restoration and Management of Rare or Declining Habitats (643)
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)

As a native plant species, it is useful as a component in the restoration and diversification of native habitats particularly in Southern Michigan, its source of origin. Indiangrass may also be useful in combination with other warm- and cool-season grasses for erosion control because of its massive root system.

Area of Adaptation and Use
This species is found in dry to moist, open areas throughout much of the United States, and is a major component of tall and mixed grass prairies. The primary utilization area for Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass is the Great Lakes region.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass can be established from seed. Indiangrass seeds often have fluffy appendages that make the seed difficult to plant using a standard grain drill. Using a grain drill with a fluffy seed box is recommended for mechanical planting. Seed can be broadcast and cultipacked as well. Seeding rate for Indiangrass conservation cover is 2 to 5 lbs/a PLS and 10 lbs/a PLS for pasture. Increase seeding rate by 10% if broadcast seeding methods are used. Care should be taken to limit seeding depth to no more than ¼ inch in most soils and to ensure adequate seed to soil contact. Weed control during establishment is critical. Mowing and use of registered herbicides will aid in weed control. Always read and follow herbicide label directions.

Field of Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass

Ecological Considerations

No insect or disease problems have been observed on Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass.

Seed and Plant Production

Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass produces seed annually. Seed can be harvested mechanically with a combine or a brush stripper. Timing is critical as mature seed may fall off the plant. Seed may be cleaned using a fanning mill. Using a debearder to remove the fluffy appendages will aid in seed cleaning and handling.

Availability

Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass, as well as other Rose Lake PMC releases, is available from commercial suppliers. Rose Lake PMC does not sell releases to the general public, although small quantities of seed are available to commercial seed or nursery growers for increase purposes.

Field of Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass

For more information, contact:
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Citation

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For additional information about this and other plants, please contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office, or Conservation District <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>, and visit the PLANTS Web site <http://plants.usda.gov> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

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