



Southlow Michigan Germplasm big bluestem

Andropogon gerardii Vitman



Southlow Michigan Germplasm Big Bluestem

The USDA-NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center (PMC), the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources released Southlow Michigan Germplasm big bluestem as a source-identified ecotype for the Great Lakes region in 2001.

Description

Southlow Michigan Germplasm big bluestem has features consistent with the species. It is a perennial, warm-season bunch grass with short, scaly rhizomes. Stems are erect, pithy, and can reach a height of eight feet. It is very leafy at the base, lessening considerably up the stem. Leaf blades have long, silky hairs that are widely dispersed on the upper surface. Plants bear two to six racemes at the top of the culms, and usually some smaller inflorescences from the leaf axils.

Source

Southlow Michigan Germplasm big bluestem is a multi-origin native germplasm with 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

Southlow Michigan Germplasm big bluestem is useful as a component plant in the restoration and diversification of native habitats, particularly in Southern Michigan, its source of origin. Michigan NRCS technical specialists have determined that Southlow Michigan Germplasm big bluestem 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)



Southlow Michigan Germplasm Big Bluestem in Bloom

Area of Adaptation and Use

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.

The primary utilization area for Southlow Michigan Germplasm big bluestem is the southern Great Lakes region.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Southlow Michigan Germplasm big bluestem can be established by seed. Big bluestem 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 big bluestem is 2 to 5 lbs/a PLS. 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 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.

Ecological Considerations

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

Seed and Plant Production

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



Southlow Michigan Germplasm Big Bluestem

Availability

Southlow Michigan Germplasm big bluestem, 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.

For more information, contact:
Rose Lake Plant Materials Center
7472 Stoll Road, East Lansing, MI 48823
Phone: 517-641-6300
Fax: 855-701-4363

Citation

Release Brochure for Southlow Michigan Germplasm big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*). USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rose Lake Plant Materials Center, East Lansing, MI 48823. Published September 2001, Revised April 2014.

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/>>

Helping People Help The Land

USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER