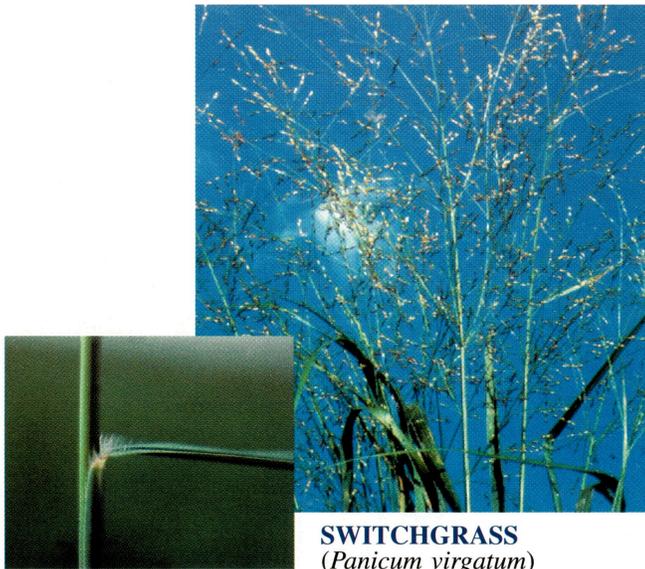


Native Warm Season Grasses



SWITCHGRASS
(*Panicum virgatum*)

Sod forming, grows 3 to 6 feet tall

IDENTIFICATION TIPS:

Sheath: Round, open, white to purplish tinged below.

Blade: Rolled in the bud shoot, flat up to 1/2-inch wide.

Ligule: Fringe of hairs with a dense mat of hairs extending onto the upper leaf surface.

Inflorescence: Open panicle.



LITTLE BLUESTEM
(*Schizachyrium scoparium*)

Strong bunch grass, grows 2 to 3 feet tall

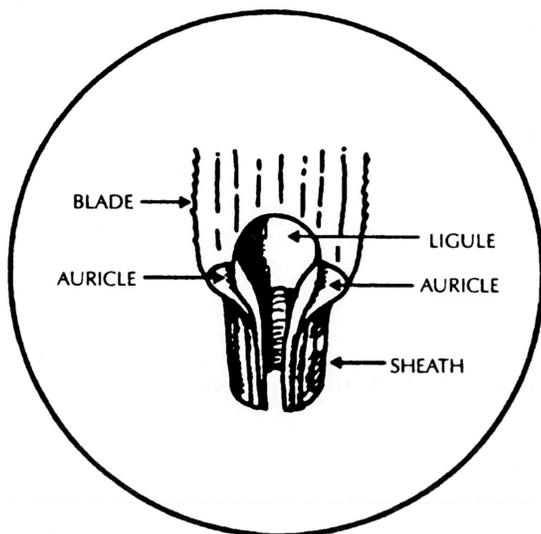
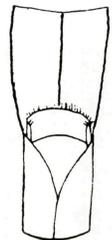
IDENTIFICATION TIPS:

Sheath: Flattened, open, often purplish at the base.

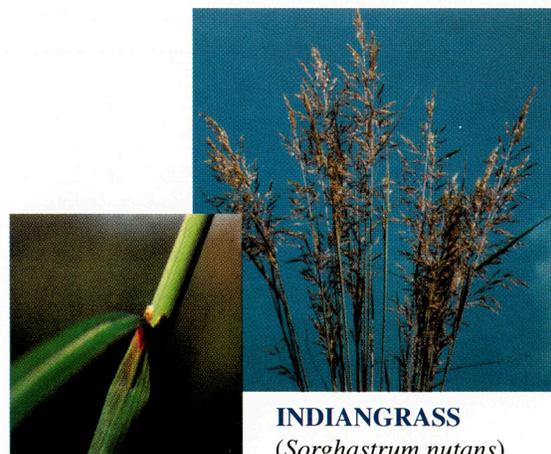
Blade: Folded in the bud shoot, folded along the midrib, narrow.

Ligule: Small membranous.

Inflorescence: Dense hairy seed head.



Guide to Identification Tips



INDIANGRASS
(*Sorghastrum nutans*)

Spreads by short rhizomes, somewhat bunchy, grows 3 to 6 feet tall

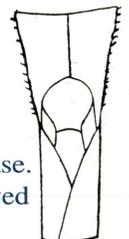
IDENTIFICATION TIPS:

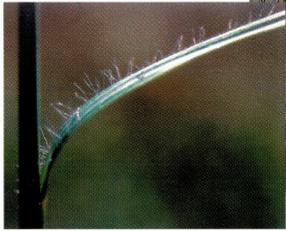
Sheath: Round, open, may be hairy at the base.

Blade: Rolled in the bud shoot, flat, narrowed at base.

Ligule: Prominent, the sides of which seem to be projections of the sheath margins.

Inflorescence: Shiny golden yellow with long grayish hairs with twisted awns.





BIG BLUESTEM
(*Andropogon gerardii*)

Bunch grass with short rhizomes
Grows 6 to 9 feet tall

IDENTIFICATION TIPS:

Sheath: Round to somewhat flattened, open purplish at the base, usually hairy.

Blade: Rolled in the basal shoot, silky hairs widely dispersed on the upper leaf surface.

Ligule: Small membranous.

Inflorescence: Turkey foot shaped seed head.



EASTERN GAMAGRASS
(*Tripsacum dactyloides*)

Forms large clumps, 6 to 8 feet tall, spreads by short knotty jointed rhizomes

IDENTIFICATION TIPS:

Sheath: Enclosing and flattened at the plant base to rounded at nodes near the inflorescence.

Blade: Up to 1 1/2 inches wide, prominent midrib.

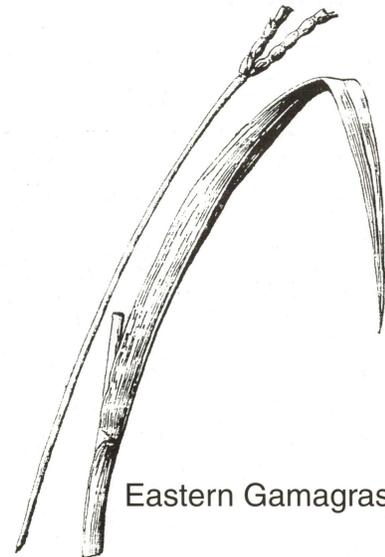
Ligule: Ring of short hairs.

Inflorescence: One to three spikes, female part below the male part. Seed is enclosed in a woody structure. Structures break apart at joints, with each part containing one seed.



Benefits of Planting Warm Season Grasses:

- Provide high quality forage in mid-summer when many other forage grasses decline in quality and quantity.
- More drought tolerant and continue to grow after cool season grasses stop growing, since they can more efficiently use existing soil moisture.
- Stands are long lived and do not require reseeding.
- Can be managed to provided good quality wildlife habitat, while still providing quality forage.
- Serve as efficient scavengers of nutrients and also respond to supplemental nutrients.
- Capture leached nutrients due to their deeper rooting depths.



Eastern Gamagrass

More information on warm season grasses is available at

The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative website: www.glic.org

The NRCS Grazing Lands Technology Institute website: www.ftw.nrcs.usda.gov/glti/homepage.html

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.