

Native Warm Season Grasses



SWITCHGRASS
(*Panicum virgatum*)

Sod forming, grows 3 to 6 feet tall

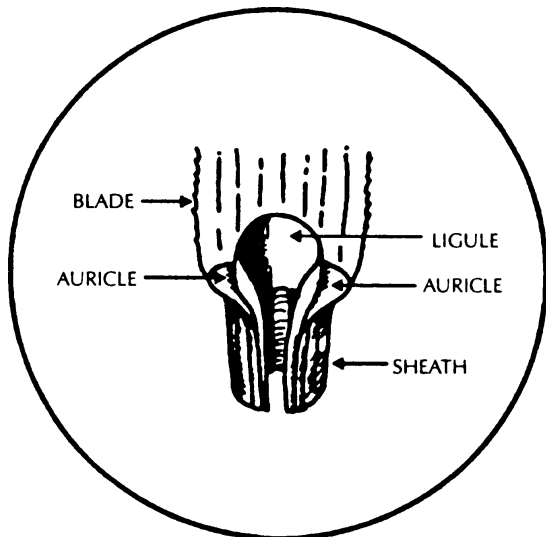
IDENTIFICATION TIPS:

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.



Guide to Identification Tips



LITTLE BLUESTEM
(*Schizachyrium scoparium*)

Strong bunch grass, grows 2 to 3 feet tall

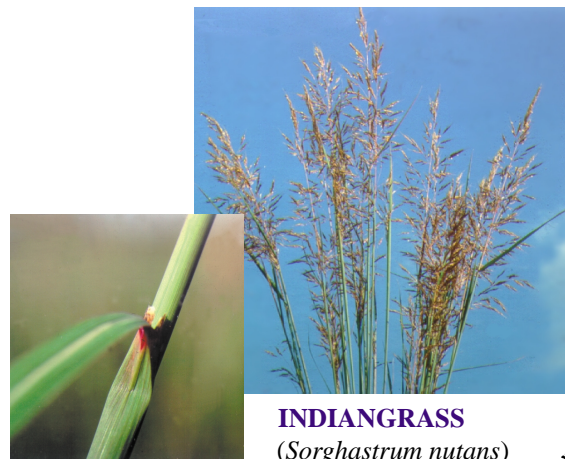
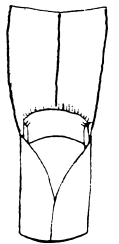
IDENTIFICATION TIPS:

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.



INDIANGRASS
(*Sorghastrum nutans*)

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

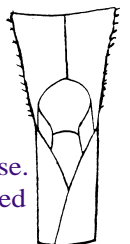
IDENTIFICATION TIPS:

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

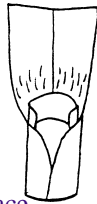
IDENTIFICATION TIPS:

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

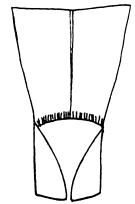
IDENTIFICATION TIPS:

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.

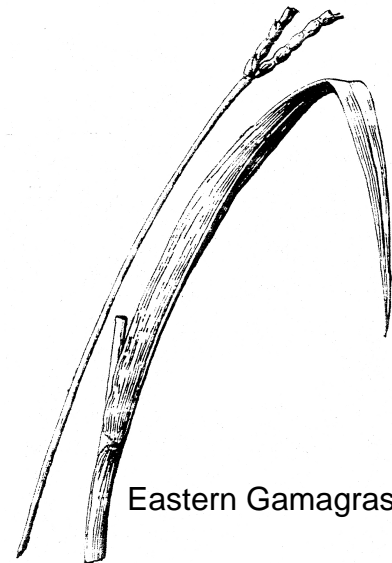
Ligule: Ring of short hairs.

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.glci.org

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

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