

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Cape May Plant Materials Center
Cape May Courthouse, NJ

NOTICE OF RELEASE OF SUTHER PRAIRIE GERMPLASM INDIANGRASS

SOURCE-IDENTIFIED CLASS OF NATURAL GERMPLASM

The Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture announces the release of a source-identified ecotype of Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans* (L.) Nash).

As a source identified release, this plant will be referred to as Suther Germplasm Indiangrass. It has been assigned the NRCS accession number 9081282. Suther Germplasm Indiangrass is released as a source identified type of certified seed.

This alternative release procedure is justified because this genetic material was collected from a remnant eastern piedmont prairie. Development threats, long history, and significant size of the Suther Farm makes this an important ecological and cultural asset.

Collection Site Information: Suther Prairie Indiangrass was collected from a wet prairie 27 miles Northeast of Charlotte NC in the floodplain of the Dutch Buffalo Creek a tributary of the Rocky River at about 680 feet above sea level. Cabarrus County NC, 27 miles northeast of Charlotte NC is in the piedmont of North Carolina; plant hardiness zone 7a; 114-139 cm (45-55 inches) of precipitation per year with a mean July temperature of 26.1 C (79 F) and a mean January temperature of 5.5 degrees C. (42 degrees F.)

Ecotype Description: Indiangrass is a native, perennial, warm-season bunchgrass and a major component of the tall grass vegetation which once dominated the prairies of the central and eastern United States. Indiangrass grows 3 to 5 feet tall. Even as a young plant, it can be distinguished from other native grass species by the "rifle-sight" ligule at the point where the leaf attaches to the stem. The leaf blade also narrows at the point of attachment. The seed head is a single, narrow, plume-like panicle of a golden brown color. The seed is light and fluffy with small awns attached.

Ecological Considerations and Evaluation: An environmental evaluation (attached) was done as directed by policy. There are no limitations or cautions on its use.

Anticipated Conservation Use: Suther Germplasm Indiangrass is recommended for roadside revegetation, critical areas, wildlife habitat, parks, recreational areas, landscapes, and prairie restoration.

Indiangrass can provide hay and forage to all classes of livestock. Its forage rates good to excellent if plants are utilized in the leafy stage and before seed head emergence. It is an important part of prairie pastures and is considered a long-lived perennial.

Potential Area of Adaptation: This release is recommended for planting throughout the Mid-Atlantic area of the Eastern U.S.

Availability of Plant Materials: Original germplasm material may be obtained through the Cape May Plant Materials Center, 1536 Route 9 North, Cape May Courthouse, NJ 08210. Phone: (609) 465-5901 FAX: (609) 465-9284.

References:

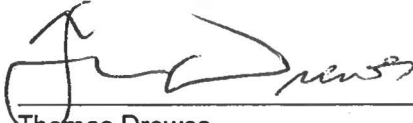
Hitchcock, A.S., *Manual of the Grasses of the United States*. 1950. USDA Misc. Publ. 200. Revised 1951

Estep, Bret and McRae, Catherine. *Prairie Restoration and Management Plan, Suther Farm Prairie*. University of N.C. at Charlotte. Unpublished report. 1997, Revised 1999

Prepared by: Christopher Miller, Regional Plant Specialist, Somerset, NJ

Signatures for release of:


Suther Germplasm Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)



Thomas Drewes
Acting State Conservationist
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
City, State

5-2-02

Date



Diane Gelburd
Director, Ecological Sciences Division
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Washington, D.C.

7/1/02

Date