



BLUE HEAVEN™

This native little bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*, 'MinnBlueA' is great for sunny or well-drained sites. It grows just over 4 feet tall and stands up well through the summer; blue foliage turns dark burgundy, then red in fall. It's hardy through USDA zone 4, requires little water after establishment and provides habitat for birds and butterflies. Released by the U of MN in 2006.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Driven to Discover™



USING NATIVE GRASSES IN THE LANDSCAPE



Sporobolus heterolepis 'Tara' is a shorter, 2' form of prairie dropseed, good for full sunny, drier sites.

Features of Native Grasses

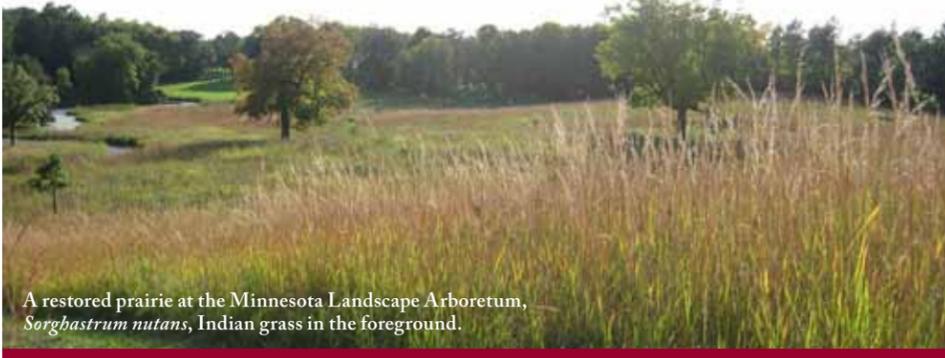
- Natural appearance
- Attractive wildlife cover for grassland birds, food for butterfly larvae
- Few insect or disease problems
- Low nutrient requirements, good drought tolerance after establishment
- Little maintenance, except spring cutback
- Seasonal interest—flowers in summer, fall and winter interest
- Fast growth—most are mature size by three years
- Movement with the wind provides visual and audio interest, susurruration that is pleasing and unique
- Good soil cover to prevent erosion; roots add organic matter to soil as they regenerate each year

Top photos from left: Blue Heaven™ little bluestem; Skipper butterfly; *Panicum virgatum* 'Northwind' in summer; Blue grama, *Bouteloua gracilis* (foreground) and sideoats grama, *Bouteloua curtipendula* (background)

Grasses for Prairie and Meadow Restorations

Grasses are the backbone of the prairie, throughout the short, mid and tallgrass prairie. The following grasses, all native to the U. S. are good choices for prairie restoration or reconstruction projects and are listed with their soil preference.

BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	SITE
<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	big bluestem	mesic to wet
<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	side oats grama	dry to mesic
<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>	blue grama	dry
<i>Buchloe dactyloides</i>	buffalograss	dry
<i>Elymus canadensis</i>	Canada wildrye	mesic
<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>	June grass	dry to mesic
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	switchgrass	wet to mesic, tolerates most sites
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	little bluestem	dry to mesic
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	Indian grass	mesic
<i>Spartina pectinata</i>	cord grass	wet to mesic
<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	prairie dropseed	dry



A restored prairie at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, *Sorghastrum nutans*, Indian grass in the foreground.



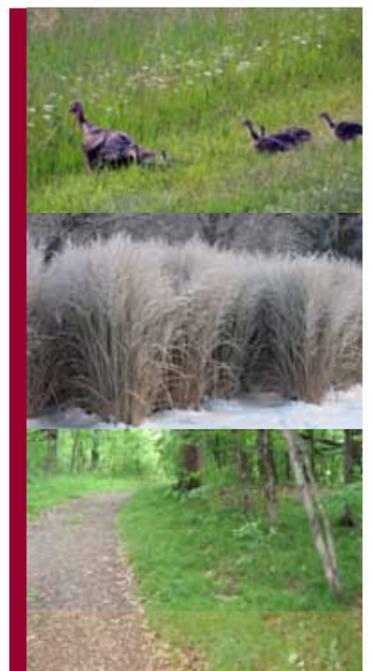
Carex pensylvanica, Pennsylvania sedge, makes a good native ground cover under trees or dry shade.

Shade Tolerant Native Grasses, Sedges and Rushes

<i>Carex muskingumensis</i>	palm sedge
<i>Carex pensylvanica</i>	Pennsylvania sedge
<i>Carex radiata</i>	eastern star sedge
<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>	river or wood oats; native to Missouri and Southeast US
<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>	'River Mist' woodoats; selected for striped foliage
<i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i>	tufted hairgrass and all cultivars
<i>Elymus hystrix</i> var. <i>hystrix</i>	eastern bottlebrush
<i>Juncus tenuis</i>	path rush
<i>Luzula</i> species	woodrush

Grasses for Wildlife

BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	WILDLIFE USE	HEIGHT, COMMENTS
<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	big bluestem	whitetail deer & bison; skipper butterflies; songbirds, bobwhite quail, prairie chicken, small mammals	5-7'; can form sod and dense stands
<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>	blue grama	skipper butterflies, antelope	1-2'; interesting seedheads
<i>Carex</i> species	many sedges: esp. hairy, tussock	butterfly larval food	6"-4', shade tolerant
<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>	wood or river oats	birds, rodents and skipper butterflies	2-4'; shade tolerant; may winter kill, but self-seeds
<i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i>	tufted hairgrass	several butterflies, deer, elk, rabbits, host to at least 40 species of Lepidopteran insects worldwide	2-4'; shade tolerant
<i>Leersia oryzoides</i>	rice cutgrass	water fowl and many birds feed on seed; cover for many birds; lakeshores	3-4'; wet or muddy soils, good for soil stabilization
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	switchgrass	food, nesting and cover for pheasants, quail, rabbits, turkeys, doves and song birds	3-6'; aggressive, self-seeds
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	little bluestem	songbirds, upland game birds, skipper butterflies	2-4'; bunch grass, red fall color
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	Indian grass	whitetail deer; bobwhite quail, skipper butterflies, birds and small mammals	3-6'; attractive seedheads
<i>Spartina pectinata</i>	prairie cordgrass	cover and habitat for birds and small mammals	4-7'; rhizomes stabilize wet sties
<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	prairie dropseed	abundant seed for songbirds	3-4'; open mound, fragrant seedheads



Turkeys find cover in grasslands; *Panicum virgatum* 'Northwind' in winter; *Carex pensylvanica*, Pennsylvania sedge on woodland walk.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Ornamental Grasses for Cold Climates
www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/dg6411.html
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