USDA NRCS
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Native Plants

Warm Season Grasses, Flowers and Legumes

Warm Season Grasses

Big Bluestem
(Andropogon gerardii)

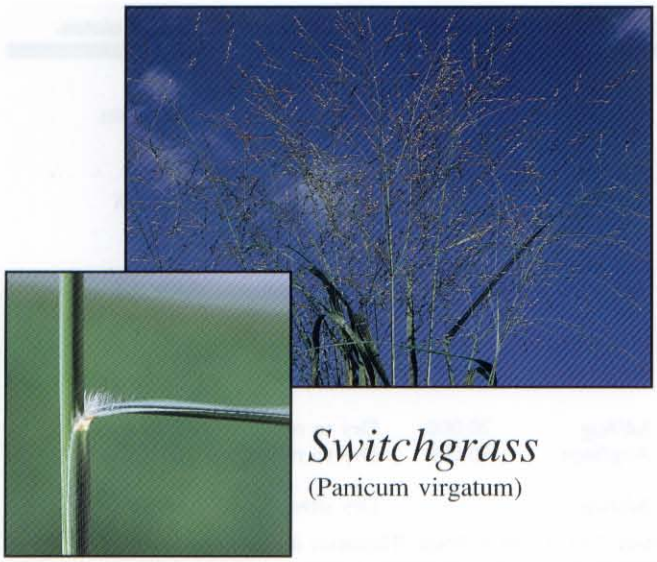
Spreads by short rhizomes
Somewhat bunchy
Grows 6 to 9 feet tall

Identification Tips:
Sheath: Round to somewhat flattened, open, often purplish at the base, usually hairy
Blade: Rolled in the bud shoot, silky hairs widely dispersed on the upper leaf surface
Ligule: Small membranous

Little Bluestem
(Schizachyrium scoparium)

Strong bunch grass
Grows 2 to 4 feet tall

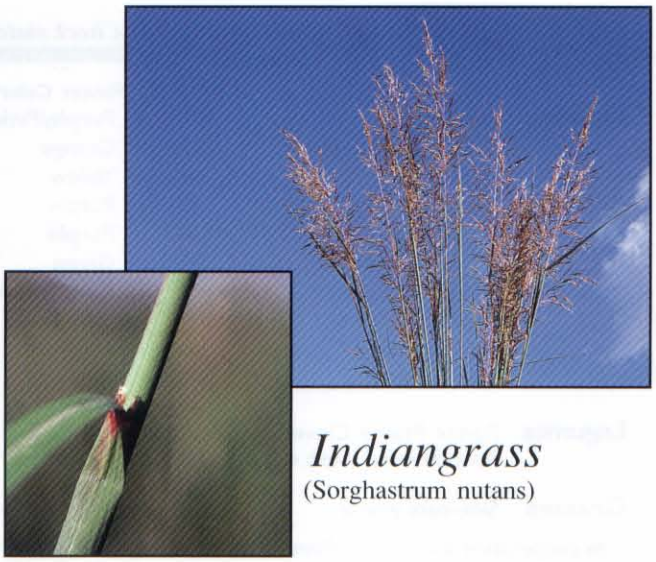
Identification Tips:
Sheath: Flattened, open, often purplish at the base
Blade: Folded in the bud shoot, folded along the midrib, narrow
Ligule: Small membranous



Switchgrass
(Panicum virgatum)

Sod forming, 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

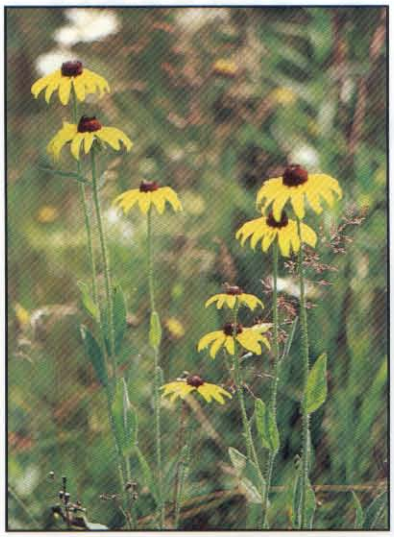


Indiangrass
(Sorghastrum nutans)

Spreads by short rhizomes, somewhat bunchy, 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, membranous, clawlike -- often referred to as a rifle sight

Prairie Flowers



Black-eyed Susan
(Rudbeckia hirta)

2-5' tall, blooms July to Sept., prefers dry sites, 100,000 seeds/oz.

Legumes

White Wild Indigo
(Baptisia lactea)

2-3' tall, blooms May to June, medium to moist sites, 1585 seeds/oz.

Yellow Coneflower
(Ratibida pinnata)

2-5' tall, blooms July-Sept.,dry to moist sites, 27,000 seeds/oz

Canada Tick Trefoil
(Desmodium canadense)

1-5' tall, blooms July-August, moist sites, 4,500 seeds/oz

Other Plants to Consider

Check state plant reference manuals for species occurrence and status.

		Ht. in ft.	Flower Color	Flower Date	Seeds/Oz.	Preferred Site
Flowers	Bergamot	2-4'	Purple/Pink	Jul/Sept	78,000	Medium to moist, deep silts
	Butterfly Milkweed	2-3'	Orange	Jun/Aug	3,500	Dry to medium
	Cupplant	3-6'	Yellow	Jul/Sept	1,400	Medium to moist
	Leadplant	2-3'	Purple	Jun/Jul	17,000	Dry to medium, Sandy soil
	Purple Coneflower	2-4'	Purple	Jun/Jul	4,500	Dry to medium
	Rattlesnake Master	2-6'	Green	Jun/Aug	8,000	Medium to moist
	Rough Blazing Star	1-4'	Purple/Pink	Aug/Sept	13,000	Dry to medium, Sandy soil
	Showy Sunflower	3-7'	Yellow	Jul/Aug	4,500	Dry to medium, Rich deep silts
	Spiderwort	1-2'	Purple/Blue	May/Jul	8,000	Dry to moist
	Stiff Goldenrod	3-4'	Yellow	Aug/Oct	45,000	Dry to moist
Legumes	Purple Prairie Clover	1-2'	Purple/Red	Jul/Aug	20,000	Dry to medium, well drained
	Roundheaded bush clover	2-4'	White	Aug/Sept	10,000	Dry to moist
Grasses	Side-oats grama	1-3'	——	Jul/Aug	———	Dry sites, Shallow, rocky

In cooperation with NRCS Plant Materials Program. Photos courtesy USDA-NRCS Iowa, Wisconsin and Wisconsin DNR

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