



United States Department of Agriculture

Soil Conservation Service

Program Aid Number 1319

'Cochise' atherstone lovegrass



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'Cochise' atherstone lovegrass (*Fragrostis lehmanniana* Nees X *E. trichophora*) is a robust, warm-season, perennial bunchgrass. It can be used as forage for both livestock and wildlife on rangelands and is useful in rangeland restoration as well as erosion control along highways, construction sites, and other disturbed areas within the desert Southwest.

Introduced into the United States in 1961 from Pretoria, South Africa, under the name *Fragrostis atherstone*, the cultivar Cochise was released in 1979 by the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and the Arizona Agricultural Experiment Station.

Description

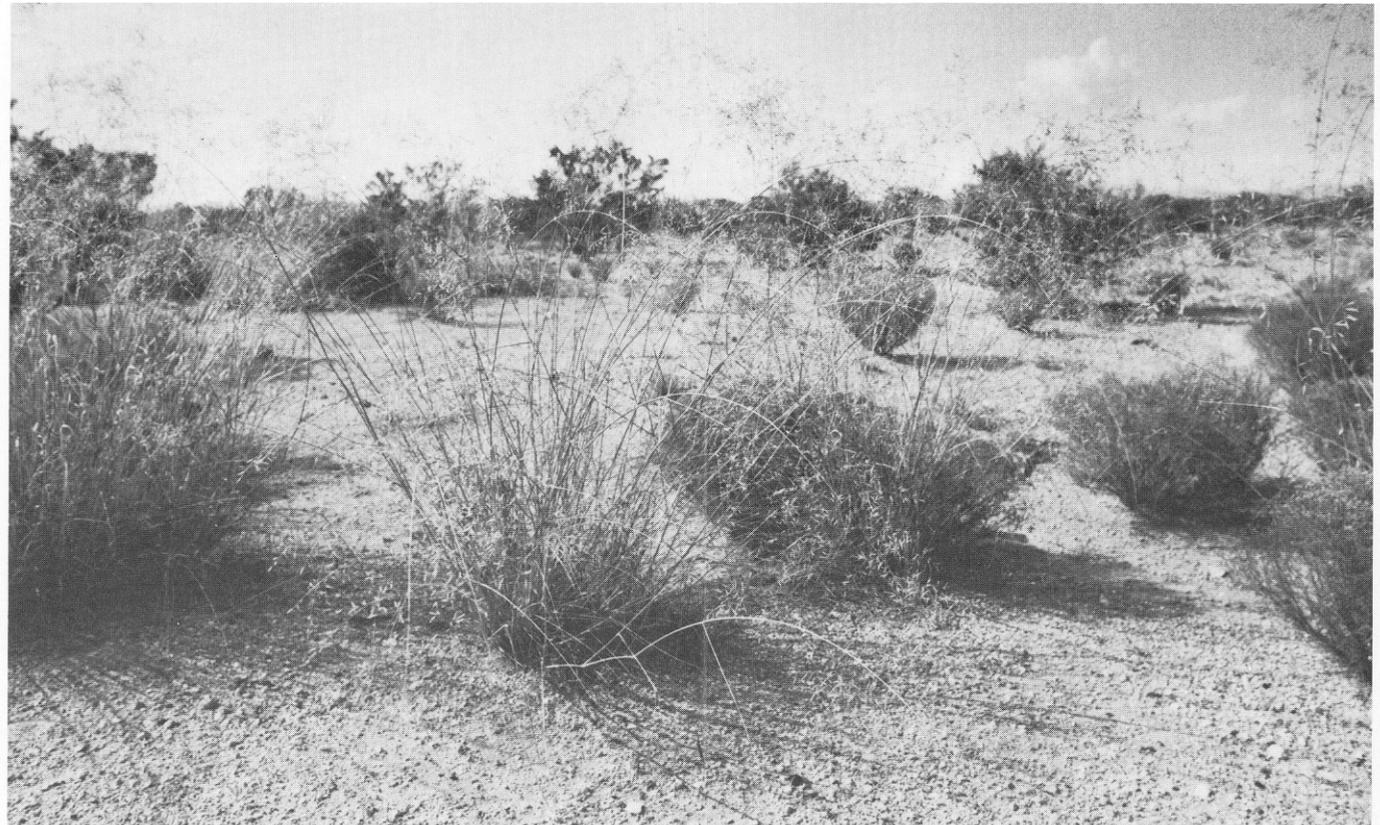
Cochise plants are grayish green and grow up to 48 inches tall. A tuft of spreading hairs at the base of each panicle (seed head) makes it easily identified from other lovegrasses. Cochise seed germinate easily and have high seedling vigor. Studies have shown Cochise to persist longer and produce more forage than Lehmann's on similar sites

Adaptation

Cochise is adapted to both medium- and light-textured soils. It is best adapted to elevations between 1,500 and 6,000 feet that have at least 10 to 12 inches of annual rainfall.



Leaf and seed structure of 'Cochise' atherstone lovegrass



Establishment

If the site is accessible to equipment. Cochise seed can be drilled at a depth of one-eighth inch. In rough sites, the seed can be broadcast.

Because Cochise seed are very small (about 6.5 million seed per pound), only one-fourth to one-half pound of pure live seed (pls) [†] per acre are needed if drill seeded, and 1 pound pls per acre if broadcast seeded. Seeding rates should be doubled for use along highways or on disturbed areas. At medium and high elevations, plantings should be made before summer rains begin. At lower elevations, plantings should be made early enough to utilize spring moisture.

Seeding mixtures for rangeland restoration should contain no more than 25 percent Cochise by seed count. Plantings along highways and other disturbed areas should be occasionally mowed or grazed to keep plants healthy and vigorous. Pure stands should be fenced and managed separately.

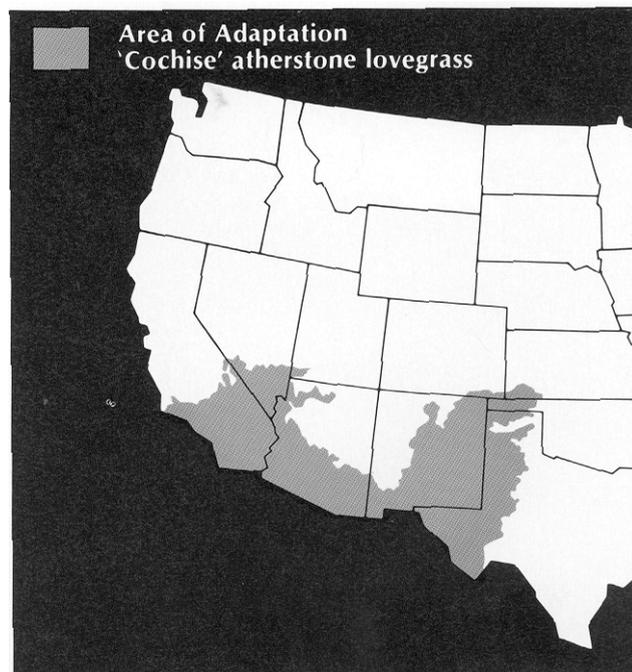
Seed production at the SCS Plant Materials Center in Tucson, Arizona, averaged 165 pounds per acre with combine harvesting.

Availability

Cochise seed are commercially available through many sources. The Soil Conservation Service maintains breeder seed at the Plant Materials Center in Tucson, Arizona.

For more information on where you can buy Cochise and how to use and plant it, contact your local SCS office listed in the telephone directory under U.S. Government. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service.

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[†] pls (pure live seed) = percent germination × percent purity of seed lot. To obtain actual seeding rate, divide recommended seeding rate by pls. Example: 3.5 lb/acre, 50% germination × 85% purity = 42%. 3.5 lb ÷ 0.42 = 8.3 lb