

Management

and

uses

of

LEHMANN LOVEGRASS



In Arizona

Lehmann lovegrass, *Eragrostis lehmanniana* Nees is an introduced warm-season, short-lived perennial bunchgrass. Stems are branched 1.5 to 2 feet tall, geniculate or bent at the nodes; often rooting at the nodes; leaf-blades short and narrowly linear tapering to a rigid point; inflorescence lax and open. This plant is drought tolerant but not cold-hardy. It has outstanding seedling vigor and is the most reliable grass among hundreds tested for reseeding poor condition rangeland. Lehmann lovegrass is a good seed producer and an excellent reseeder on rangeland. It sometimes acts like a reseeding annual at high elevations or following very cold winters.

Varieties - 'A-68' released by the Tucson Plant Materials Center is available on the commercial market.

ADAPTATIONS

Climate - This plant is well adapted in all of Major Land Resource Area 41 below 4500 feet and in MLRA 39 below 4001 feet where average annual precipitation exceeds 12 inches or on sites with less precipitation that receive additional runoff from adjacent areas. It is moderately well adapted in MLRA 38, 40 and 42 with special cultural practices to catch and store rainfall or on sites that receive additional moisture from adjacent areas. The plant has survived brief periods with temperatures down to 10°F. Extended periods at this temperature will kill many plants.

Soil - Lehmann lovegrass performs well on sandy and gravelly loam soils of the foothill fans and valley slopes. It has also grown well on limy soils but is not adapted to very silty soils.

Range Sites - Lehmann lovegrass acts like an increaser plant on all range sites in which it is adapted when grazed by livestock.

USES

Beautification, Erosion Control and Recreation - This is an excellent ground cover plant for erosion control of cut banks and fills and preventing soil blowing. It is attractive in highway rights-of-way where it has been used extensively.

Livestock - Lehmann lovegrass is grazed well by cattle and horses during the winter and early spring, but is not relished by stock during summer and early fall. The summer growth holds green stems until late in the fall and greens up early in the spring. It provides good grazing during the winter and spring seasons which are normally feed deficiency periods for cattle in areas to which Lehmann is adapted. Good stands of Lehmann lovegrass are producing 1000 pounds of dry forage per acre annually.

wildlife - Lehmann lovegrass is of minor value to deer, being grazed during the winter and spring only in the absence of other more palatable feed. It will provide cover for small game on areas that might otherwise be bare.

ESTABLISHMENT

It is best to broadcast seed of this plant on prepared seedbeds. Airplane broadcasting is often used. Due to the very small seed, plant less than 1/2 inch deep on very firm seedbeds if drilling is attempted. The recommended seeding rate is one pound per acre. However, one-half pound of seed would be sufficient if it could be spread uniformly. Seed should be planted on seedbeds from which competing vegetation has been removed and preferably with water-conservation measures established. Common methods of seedbed preparation are root-plowing, pitting, furrowing, plowing and bulldozing. Seed should be planted prior to the summer rainy season. It may be done any time between March 1 and July 15.

MANAGEMENT

New seedings should be fully protected from grazing for two growing seasons.. After satisfactory establishment it should be grazed during winter and spring periods. No more than 50 percent of the season's growth should be utilized at any one time. Seeded areas serve their purpose best if they are fenced and provided with water so they can be used separately.

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