

Establishment

Once established, stands have excellent longevity, and will become more dense with time. Bareroot rhizome pieces can be dug and planted in the spring to establish windstrip barriers or stabilize streambanks. When establishing via seed, debarbed seed is preferred. Prairie cordgrass has 183,000 seeds/lb. The solid seeding rate when using a drill is 30-35 seeds/sq.ft. (7-8 PLS lbs/ac). If broadcast seeding a small area, increase seeding rate to greater than 30 seeds/sq.ft. In a mixture, prairie cordgrass should not exceed 20 percent of the mix. A late spring seeding is preferred (May 10-June 20 in North Dakota). The recommended seeding depth is 1/2 to 3/4 inch.

Seed Production

- ◆ Wide row spacing is recommended for seed production fields (7-15 ft).
- ◆ Seed can be harvested after the first frost. Seed ripens in September and does not shatter until October. There is some dormancy in freshly harvested seed.
- ◆ Average seed yield is 30-75 PLS lbs/ac.
- ◆ Seed viability is greatly reduced with extended storage of 3-4 years.

Seed Availability

Red River Natural Germplasm prairie cordgrass is a selected class natural germplasm release originating from vegetative collections in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Generation 1 seed, equivalent to foundation seed, is available for seed increase from the USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Center, Bismarck, North Dakota. Generation 2 seed, equivalent to certified seed, is available from various commercial vendors.

For more information, contact:

USDA-NRCS
Plant Materials Center
3308 University Drive
Bismarck, ND 58504
Phone: (701) 250-4330
Fax: (701) 250-4334



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United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Plant Materials Center
Bismarck, North Dakota

Red River Natural Germplasm Prairie Cordgrass



Red River Natural Germplasm Prairie Cordgrass *Spartina pectinata*

Conservation Uses

- ◆ Wetland restoration and enhancement
- ◆ Streambank stabilization
- ◆ Windstrip barriers
- ◆ Filter strips
- ◆ Riparian buffers
- ◆ Wildlife habitat
- ◆ Prairie landscaping
- ◆ Early season forage



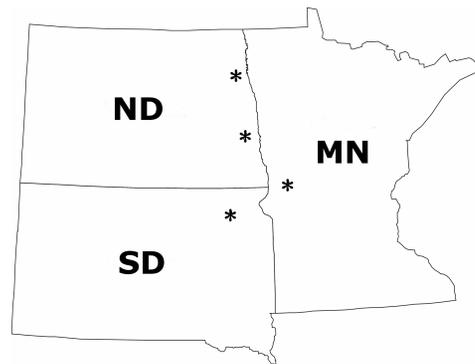
Characteristics of Red River

- ◆ Genetic diversity
- ◆ Vigorous growth
- ◆ Good seed production
- ◆ Leafiness
- ◆ Strong rhizome spread

Collection Sites of Red River

Regional collection from:

- ◆ Grant County, Minnesota
- ◆ Cass County, North Dakota
- ◆ Grand Forks County, North Dakota
- ◆ Day County, South Dakota



Plant Description

Prairie cordgrass is native to most of the United States. It is a robust, warm-season grass that averages 5-7 feet in height. It is commonly named ripgut because of the sharp, serrated leaf blade edges. Red River Natural Germplasm prairie cordgrass has both coarse and fine leaved plants. The uniform, dark green color changes to yellow-gold in the

fall and winter. The stiff stems and abundant leaves provide excellent upright wildlife habitat. Forage quality is fair, if harvested early in the growing season. Prairie cordgrass spreads quite rapidly by vigorous, scaly rhizomes. Seeds are flat and paper-like with barbed awns.



Site Preference

Wet prairies, wet meadow zone in a wetland, drainage areas, marshes, and potholes are preferred sites of prairie cordgrass. It will grow on a variety of soil types and is moderately tolerant of salt and alkaline conditions.