

Central Texas Native Seeds Evaluation Projects Update

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As the Texas Native Seeds (TNS) project moves into its fourth year of operation in Central Texas, 15 native plant species are in various stages of evaluation. Ongoing field trials are located at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research Center in Stephenville, TX and the USDA NRCS Plant Materials Center in Knox City, TX. These evaluations will ultimately lead to new native seed releases for use in restoration activities in Central Texas.

We are currently evaluating multiple populations of 12 species of grasses, 2 legumes, and 1 forb at both research locations. In spring 2014, we added 8 of these species to our efforts, including bundle flower, hooded windmill grass, sand dropseed, slim tridens, hairy grama, dotted gayfeather, golden prairie clover, and plains bristlegrass. Monthly field evaluations of all plants will occur at both locations for the next 3 years and seed will be collected for quality testing as it is produced. Evaluation data collected on populations of each of the 15 species being screened for selection will guide identification of the best populations of each species for restoration use, release, and eventual commercialization. We hope to make the first of many releases from the program in 2015.

New seed sources developed through these efforts will help meet the growing demand for native plant materials for restoration projects. These extensive evaluation efforts will insure provision of high quality seeds, greater diversity in market options for native seeds, and improved native seeding success in Central Texas.

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