

## ***Central Texas Native Seed Project: Collection, Evaluation, Increase, and Release***

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*Central Texas Native Seed Project's* (CTNSP) goal is to develop locally-adapted native plant seed sources. This is accomplished through collecting, evaluating, selecting, increasing, and eventually releasing native plant populations that can be mass produced commercially. CTNSP personnel collect seed from native plant populations in 67 counties encompassing several ecoregions. Evaluations are conducted at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research Center near Stephenville, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center near Knox City, and the Sandbrock Ranch near Aubrey.

In 2019, new plant evaluations consisted of 60 populations of Indiangrass and 22 populations of gayfeather at the Stephenville, Knox City, and Aubrey locations. Data collected include growth measurements, plant characteristic rankings, seed production, and seed quality analysis. Past evaluations of sideoats grama and seep muhly grown at these three sites recently resulted in the selection of the best-performing populations. These populations will be placed into seed increase plots, with release expected in 1 to 2 years.

Advanced evaluations will be conducted on selected populations as they are grown for seed increase in field plots at the Stephenville location. Seed harvested will then be distributed as Selected Texas Native Germplasm by the *Texas Native Seeds Program* to commercial seed companies. These and several other upcoming releases (hairy grama and tall grama) will result in a greater diversity of commercially available native plant seed sources for reclamation and restoration efforts in Central Texas.

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Indiangrass plots for new species evaluation in Stephenville, Texas.



Sideoats grama evaluation plots 2019 at Sandbrock Ranch in Aubrey, Texas.