

Where to Obtain Information

Contact your local USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service Office for more information.

Visit our Plant Materials Internet Site at <http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov> to find more information on solving conservation problems using plants.

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January 2006

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United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Plant Materials Center

'Van Horn' Green Sprangletop



An improved
conservation plant
selected by the James
E. "Bud" Smith Plant
Materials Center, Knox
City, Texas



'Van Horn'

Green sprangletop

Leptochloa dubia

'Van Horn' is a cultivar release.

Origin

'Van Horn' was originally collected in 1975 near 'Van Horn', Texas. 'Van Horn' was selected for its seedling vigor, high nutritious forage value, and drought tolerance. 'Van Horn' will easily establish from seed. It volunteers aggressively, producing abundant amounts of forage.

Potential Uses

'Van Horn' green sprangletop may be used in pure stands or as a filler grass component in seed mixtures. It can be used for range seeding, pasture and hayland plantings, revegetation of mined lands, and critical area plantings. 'Van Horn' provides quick ground cover and early forage. 'Van Horn' will take the grazing pressure off of other slower developing species. Over time slower-establishing and longer-lived species will start to dominate the site and 'Van Horn' will decline in population.

Plant Description

'Van Horn' green sprangletop is a native, perennial, erect, warm-season, bunchgrass with fibrous roots. Mature plants are short-lived and average 2-5 feet in height. Average seed yield per acre for 'Van Horn' is 375 pounds with an average pure live seed (PLS) of 75%.



Area of Adaptation

'Van Horn' is adapted to a variety of soils, but will favor sites with well drained soils. Green sprangletop is rarely found on heavier clay soils, but does well when introduced. It may be found in most areas of Texas and Oklahoma, except the East Texas Timberlands and the Northern Claypan Prairies. 'Van Horn' will perform well in a variety of rainfall areas

Establishment

Seedbed preparation should begin the year prior to a scheduled spring seeding. This tillage activity reduces weed pressure and increases your chances of a successful planting the first year. Plow and work the site as necessary the summer or early fall prior to establishment to create a firm weed-free seedbed. Tillage should be completed in the fall to allow time for the site to settle and accumulate moisture.

In areas of high erosion potential it is recommended to establish a dead litter cover crop the year prior to planting.

'Van Horn' may be drilled or broadcast seeded. Broadcast seeding may be used in areas not accessible with a drill, but some type of additional soil disturbance is needed to insure seed-to-soil contact.

When adding 'Van Horn' to mixtures it should be used at a rate of 1/2-1 pound of pure live seed (PLS) per acre. If planting 'Van Horn' in pure stands, 5-6 pounds of pure live seed (PLS) per acre may be used. Seed should be planted at no more than 1/4 to 1/2 inch in depth.

Soil fertility should be brought up to a medium level according to a soil test. Do not add more than 10 lbs. of N until the stand is established. Weeds may be controlled by mowing if they become a problem during establishment.

Management

Plantings should be well established before livestock grazing is permitted. Established stands of 'Van Horn' should not be grazed or cut lower than 10 inches.

'Van Horn' is one of the earliest, native grasses to produce spring growth. Heavy grazing in early spring may damage the stand. However, after other species are up and growing 'Van Horn' may be grazed without harm. Rotational grazing will help maintain a healthy stand. During the winter, dormant plants may be grazed at any time. 'Van Horn' green sprangletop is very palatable to livestock and should be included in seeding mixtures.

Availability of Plant Materials

Breeder seed will be maintained by the Plant Materials Center at Knox City. Foundation seed for grower increase is available through the Texas Foundation Seed Service, Vernon, Texas (940) 552-6226.