United States Department of Agriculture

A Conservation Plant Released by the Natural Resources Conservation Service
E. "Kika" de la Garza Plant Materials Center, Kingsville, Texas and
South Texas Natives, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute,
Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Kingsville, Texas

Nueces Germplasm sand dropseed

Sporobolus cryptandrus (Torr.) A. Gray

Nueces Germplasm sand dropseed © South Texas Natives

Nueces Germplasm sand dropseed [*Sporobolus cryptandrus* (Torr.) A. Gray.] was cooperatively released in 2016 by the South Texas Natives Project of the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, and USDA NRCS E. "Kika" de la Garza Plant Materials Center. This release is a selected plant material class of certified seed.

Description
Nueces Germplasm sand dropseed is a perennial, early successional, bunch grass. Panicles are open or closed depending on amount exposed from the elongated upper sheath. As the panicle matures the upper most sheath leaf twists and separates from the panicle leaving a flagged appearance nearly perpendicular to the stem.

Source
This selection is made up of five different accessions originating from the Rio Grande Plains, Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes, and Coastal Sand Plain of Texas. These five accessions were chosen from 26 accessions evaluated at three locations in South Texas. No breeding, selection or genetic manipulation was used in the development of this release.

Conservation Uses
Nueces Germplasm sand dropseed is recommended for upland wildlife plantings, critical site revegetation, right-of-way plantings, and inclusion in range seeding mixes. Seeds and seed heads are eaten by scaled quail and wild turkeys. Sand dropseed can persist in low moisture situations and have abundant seed production.

Area of Adaptation and Use
The area of known adaptation of Nueces Germplasm sand dropseed includes the Rio Grande Plains (MLRA 083B), Coastal Sand Plains (MLRA 083E) and Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes (MLRA 150B) ecoregions. It is likely to perform best on sand, sandy loam, or clay loam soils. Adaptation of this release in adjacent regions has not been tested.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings
Planting can be done in late fall or spring in South Texas. In most cases sand dropseed should be used as a component of warm-season planting mixtures. Establish a clean, weed-free seedbed by either tillage or herbicides. Prior to planting, the site should be firm and have accumulated soil moisture. Sand dropseed is seeded with a drill or broadcast seeder. If broadcast seeded, some type of additional coverage such as culti-packing or light dragging is recommended to ensure good seed to soil contact. Seed is planted 1/8 to 1/4 inch deep. Due to the small seed size of this release, it is better to plant too shallow than too deep. For calibration purposes, Nueces Germplasm sand dropseed contains approximately 4,000,000 seeds per bulk pound. A seeding rate of 0.5-1 pounds pure live seed (PLS) per acre is recommended for establishment of pure stands; when used as part of a seeding mixture the seeding rate should be adjusted according to the desired percentage of the plant on the planting site.

Areas planted to Nueces Germplasm should be deferred until plants become established and are allowed to set seed. Established plants should be allowed to produce seed annually. Sand dropseed readily reseeds itself with minimal soil disturbance.

Ecological Considerations
No severe insect or disease problems have been observed in sand dropseed once established. Cold tolerance of this germplasm beyond the area of intended use is unknown.

Seed and Plant Production
Over three years, plots of about 200 plants produced an average of 1 PLS pound of seed annually. After harvesting the seed was tested for purity and quality. This production would be equal to 350 pounds PLS produced per year per acre on 36" bedded rows with a plant population of 14,000 plants per acre (plants established using transplants spaced 1'apart).

Seed production for Nueces Germplasm can be started from transplants or direct seeded on beds or flat ground. Well maintained production plots can be expected to produce a marketable crop in the first production year. Seed is best harvested using either a FlailVac or a conventional combine. If a FlailVac is used for harvest, it is recommended that the old seed heads be removed by mowing between crops to ensure a uniform stand and to stimulate a second seed crop for harvest. Following harvest, trash can be removed using a Clipper seed cleaner.

Seed of Nueces Germplasm sand dropseed © South Texas Natives

Availability
For conservation use:
Seed will be available from native seed dealers in south Texas. Seed of Nueces Germplasm sand lovegrass release will be identified by USDA NRCS accession number 9112621.

For seed or plant increase:
All commercial seed fields of Nueces Germplasm must be located in Texas and isolated from other cultivated varieties and wild populations of *Sporobolus cryptandrus* by a minimum of 300 feet. Release of this variety will belimited to a single grower, with preference given to those who can provide production locations meeting isolation requirements. G1 and G2 seed fields have a 7 year production limit, after which time, fields must be replanted using the appropriate seed generation (G0 or G1).

For more information, contact:

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For additional information about this and other plants, please contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office, or Conservation District <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>, and visit the PLANTS Web site <http://plants.usda.gov> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>