

# Common Grasses of Grayson County

Texas Master Naturalists – Bluestem Chapter

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Advanced Training - February 21, 2021



# Classification of Grasses

**Kingdom** – **Phylum** – **Class** – **Order** – **Family** – *Genus* – *species*

**Kingdom** - Subkingdom - Superdivision – **Division** – **Class** – Subclass – **Order** – **Family**  
and then....**Tribe** – *Genus* – *species*

**Kingdom:** Plantae (Plants)

**Subkingdom:** Tracheobionta (Vascular Plants)

**Superdivision:** Spermatophyta (Seed plants)

**Division:** Magnoliophyta (Flowering plants)

**Class:** Liliopsida (Monocotyledons)

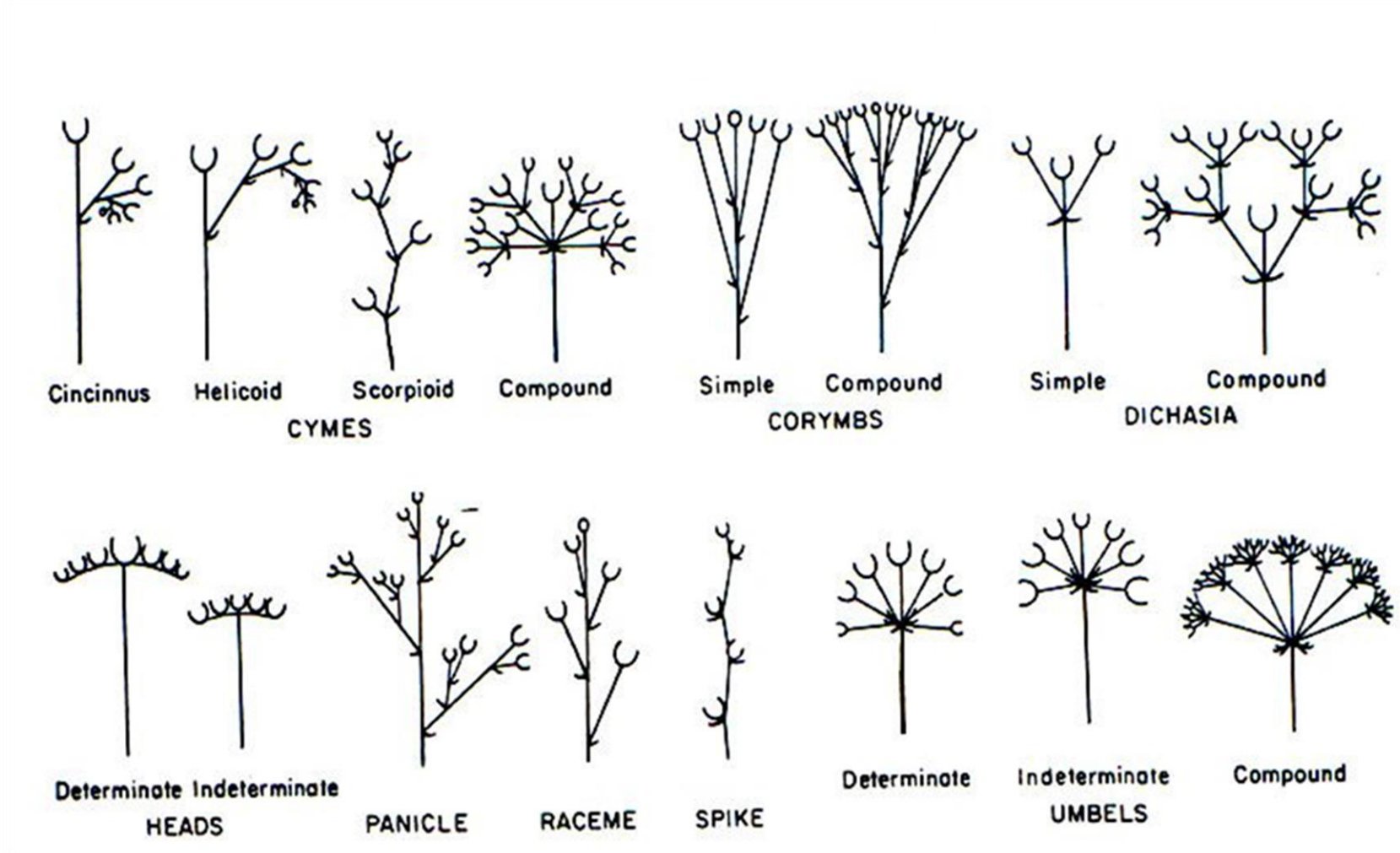
**Subclass:** Commelinidae (Wind pollinated plants with simple flowers)

**Order:** Cyperales (Sedges and grasses)

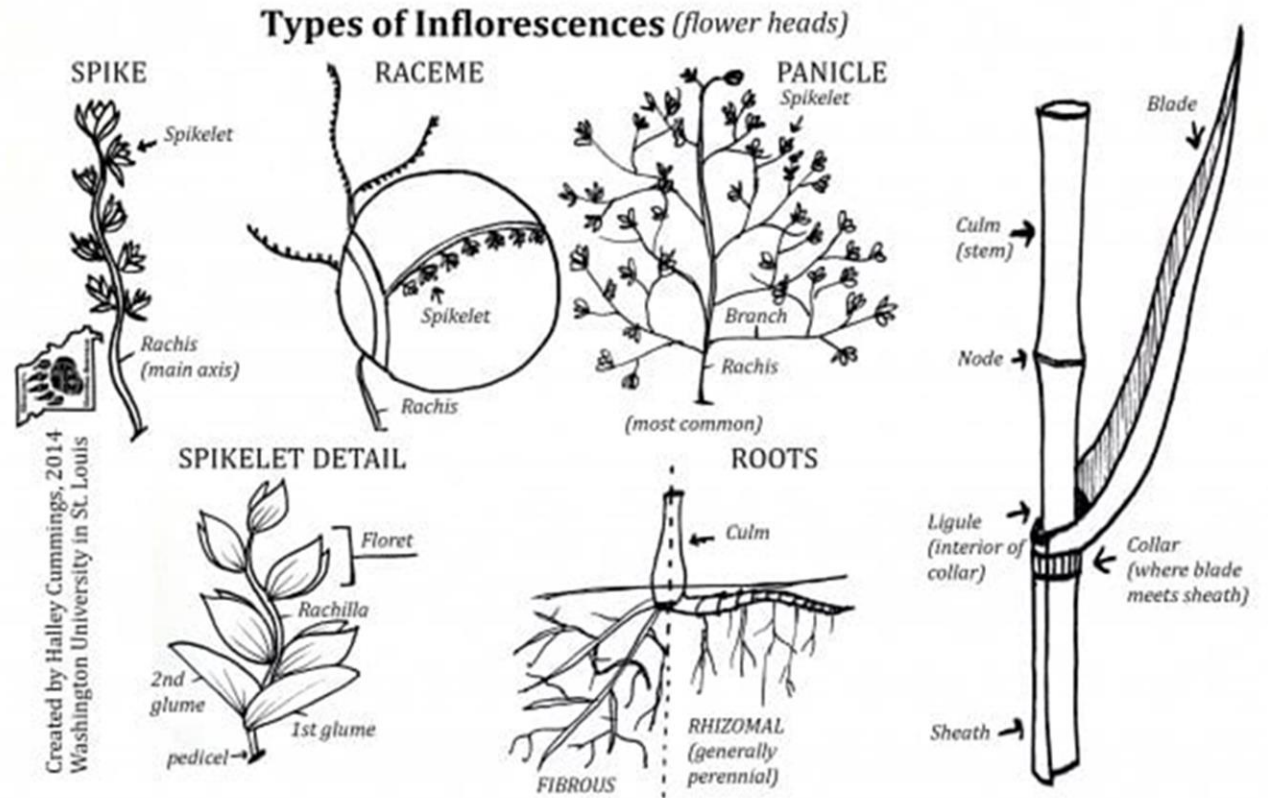
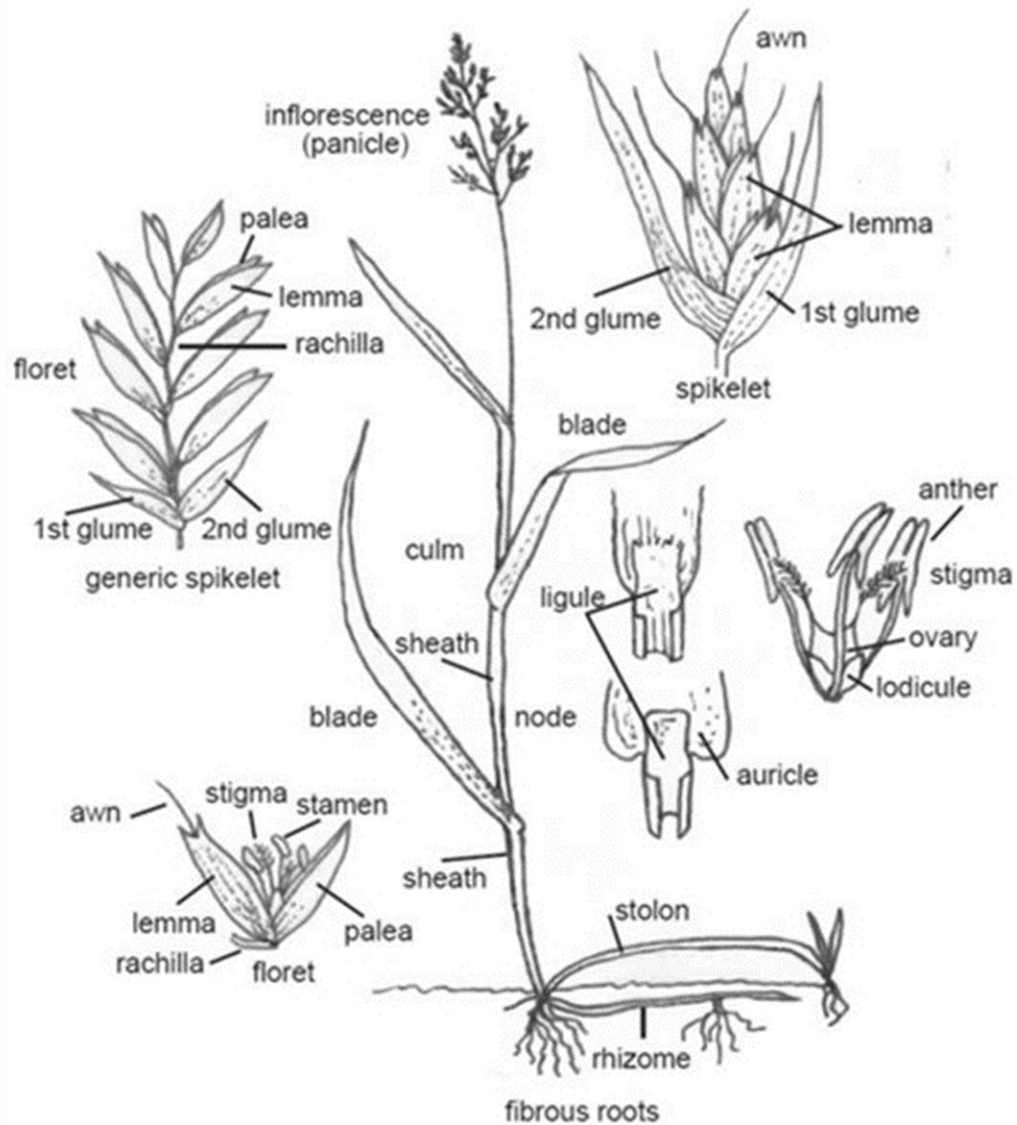
**Family:** Poacea/Graminaceae (Grasses)

Tribe – *Genus* - *species*

# Inflorescence Types



# Family Poaceae – Grasses - Vocabulary



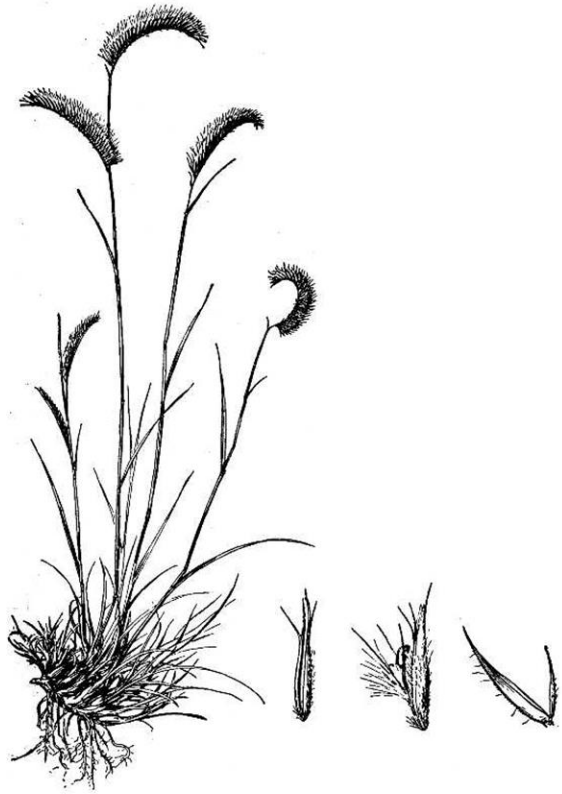
# The Gramas – Tribe Cynodonteae - Genus *Bouteloua*

Cynodonteae translates to *cyno* = “dog” + *dente* = “tooth”

Genus named for Claudio and Esteban Boutelou, 19th-century Spanish botanists

- Valuable forage grasses – short grass prairies
- Mostly perennial, but a few are annuals
- Prominent species: blue grama, hairy grama, side-oats grama
- Drought resistant, requires full sun
- Tolerates burning once established
- Likes alkaline soils, host plants for skippers
- Tolerates heavy grazing – cures well – needs to rest every 2-3 years
- Usually forms clumps with well established root systems
- Grayson County has approximately 15 *Bouteloua* spp.

# The Gramas – Genus *Bouteloua*



blue grama (P)  
*Bouteloua gracilis*  
BOGR2



hairy grama (P)  
*Bouteloua hirsuta*  
BOHI2



side-oats grama (P)  
*Bouteloua curtipendula*  
BOCU



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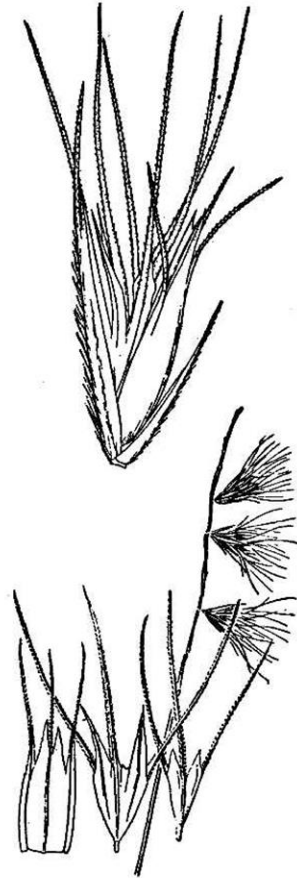


side-oats grama  
*Bouteloua curtipendula*  
BOCU

# The Gramas – Genus *Bouteloua*



Buffalograss (P)  
*Bouteloua dactyloides*  
(*Buchloë dactyloides*)  
*BODA2*



Texas grama (P)  
*Bouteloua rigidiseta*  
*BORI*



red grama (P)  
*Bouteloua trifida*  
*BOTR2*



# The Gramas – Genus *Bouteloua*



buffalograss  
*Bouteloua dactyloides*  
(*Buchloë dactyloides*)  
*BODA2*



Photo credit: Larry Allain, U.S. Geological Survey

Texas grama  
*Bouteloua rigidiseta*  
*BORI*



red grama  
*Bouteloua trifida*  
*BOTR2*

# The Bluestems (beard grass)– Tribe Andropogoneae

## Genus *Andropogon* & *Schizachyrium*

*Andropogon* translates to *andro*=“man’s” + *pogon*=“beard”

*Schizachyrium* translates to *schiz*=“split” + *achyr*=“chaff” + *ium*=“small”

- Includes two of the “Big 4” prairie grasses for grazing and hay
- Some species are undesirable, woody
- Drought resistant, requires full sun
- Tolerates burning once established, usually spreads by rhizomes
- Likes alkaline soils
- Roots (rhizomes) used by indigenous people for food
- Nutritious seeds, popular with wildlife, ground for flour
- Andropogoneae is a huge tribe with over 1200 species and 90 genera
- Grayson County has ~ 6 *Andropogon* spp and ~ 6 *Schizachyrium* spp.

# The Bluestems – Genus *Andropogon* & *Schizachyrium*



big bluestem (P)  
*Andropogon gerardii*  
ANGE



brushy bluestem (P)  
*Andropogon glomeratus*  
ANGL2



splitbeard bluestem (P)  
*Andropogon ternarius*  
ANTE2



# The Bluestems – Genus *Andropogon*



big bluestem  
*Andropogon gerardii*  
ANGE  
One of the “big 4”



brushy bluestem  
*Andropogon glomeratus*  
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splitbeard bluestem  
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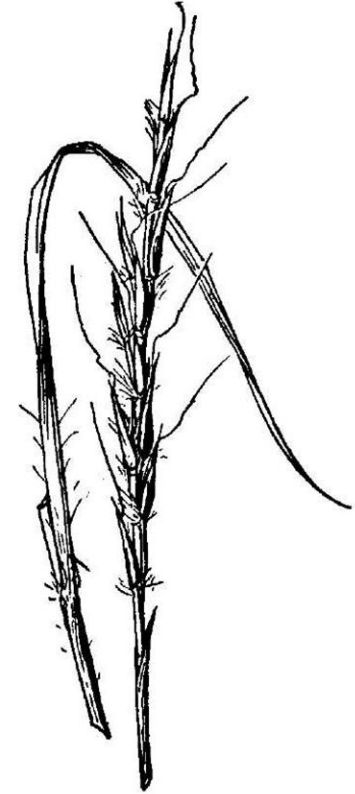
# The Bluestems – Genus *Andropogon* & *Schizachyrium*



broomsedge bluestem (P)  
*Andropogon virginicus*  
ANVI2



little bluestem (P)  
*Schizachyrium scoparium*  
SCSC



Texas bluestem (P)  
*Schizachyrium cirratum*  
SCCI

# The Bluestems – Genus *Andropogon* & *Schizachyrium*



Broomsedge bluestem  
*Andropogon virginicus*  
ANVI2



Little bluestem  
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One of the “big 4”



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One of the “big 4”



Texas bluestem  
*Schizachyrium cirratum*  
SCCI2

# The Bromes – Tribe Bromeae - Genus *Bromus*

Bromeae translates to *bromos* = “oats”

- Cool weather grasses, mostly annuals, often used as cover crops over winter
- Seed heads foraged by wild turkeys
- Leaves and green parts of some species are important winter forage for Canadian geese, deer, and cattle
- Some weedy species dangerous to grazers once seed heads appear
- Leaves are high in silica
- Usually flowers in early March
- Mostly introduced from Eurasia and South America
- Grayson County has ~ 5 *Bromus* spp



# The Bromes – Genus *Bromus*



rye brome (A)  
*Bromus secalinus*  
BRSE



Rescuegrass (A or B)  
*Bromus catharticus*  
BRCA6



field brome (A or B)  
*Bromus arvensis*  
BRAR5

# The Bromes – Genus *Bromus*



rye brome

*Bromus secalinus*

BRSE

\*harmful, noxious\*



rescuegrass

*Bromus catharticus*

BRCA6

good winter forage



field brome

*Bromus arvensis*

BRAR5

“of cultivated land”

# Common Tall Prairie Grasses



Indiangrass (P)  
Tribe: Andropogoneae  
*Sorghastrum nutans*  
SONU



Switchgrass (P)  
Tribe: Paniceae  
*Panicum virgatum*  
PAVI2



Johnsongrass (P)  
Tribe: Andropogoneae  
*Sorghum halepense*  
SOHA



# Common Tall Prairie Grasses



Indiangrass  
*Sorghastrum nutans*  
SONU2  
One of the “big 4”



switchgrass  
*Panicum virgatum*  
PAVI2  
One of the “big 4”



Johnsongrass  
*Sorghum halepense*  
SOHA



# Other Common Grasses



witchgrass  
Tribe: Paniceae  
*Panicum capillare*  
PACA6



purple lovegrass  
Tribe: Eragrostideae  
*Eragrostis spectabilis*  
ERSP



sand lovegrass  
Tribe: Eragrostideae  
*Eragrostis trichodes*  
ERTR3

# Other Common Grasses



witchgrass  
*Panicum capillare*  
PACA6



purple lovegrass  
*Eragrostis spectabilis*  
ERSP



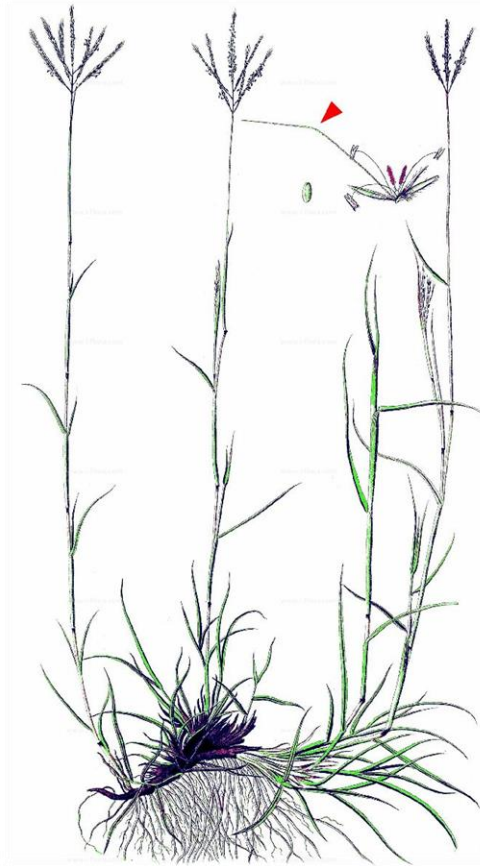
sand lovegrass  
*Eragrostis trichodes*  
ERTR3



# Other Common Grasses



inland sea oats (indian woodoats)  
Tribe: Chasmanthieae  
*Chasmanthium latifolium*  
CHLA



King Ranch grass (yellow bluestem)  
Tribe: Andropogonae  
*Bothriochloa ischaemum*  
BOIS



prairie three awn  
Tribe: Aristideae  
*Aristida oligantha*  
AROL

# Other Common Grasses



inland sea oats  
*Chasmanthium latifolium*  
CHLA



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King Ranch grass  
*Bothriochloa ischaemum*  
BOIS



prairie three awn  
*Aristida oligantha*  
AROL



# Resources

- USDA National Resource Conservation Service - database  
<https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov/java/>
- Plants of Texas Rangelands – Virtual Herbarium  
<https://rangeplants.tamu.edu/common-name-index/>
- Pollen Library – Plants for Grayson County, Texas  
<http://www.pollenlibrary.com/Local/Significant/Allergens/in/Grayson%20County/TX/>
- Ladybird Johnson Native Plant Database  
<https://www.wildflower.org/plants/>
- Manual of the Grasses of the United States (2 volume set)  
By A. S. Hitchcock, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture - ISBN: 0486227189 & 0486227189
- Shinnery and Mahler's – Flora of North Central Texas  
<http://artemis.austincollege.edu/acad/bio/gdiggs/NCTX%20pdf/FNCT%200001-0108.pdf>













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Native  
Plantings