



Plant Chat

Wanted: Plains Muhly (*Muhlenbergia cuspidata*)

Have you seen any plains muhly, also known as stonyhills muhly? The Bismarck Plant Materials Center (PMC) is looking for sites where they can dig a few plants (up to 5/site). A cooperative project between South Dakota State University and the Bismarck PMC has been initiated to investigate plains muhly for potential revegetation of coarse textured, infertile, sloping or otherwise droughty or fragile soils in the Northern Great Plains in response to ongoing climate change. Potential outcome could be a new plant release for NRCS conservation practices.

Plains muhly is a warm-season bunchgrass. It is considered a good livestock forage. It typically flowers in July-August. Leaves are narrow, alternately arranged on the stem, smooth to slightly rough on the lower surface, flat or rolled. The seed head is an uneven, narrow spike-like panicle (see photos below).

Plains muhly grows on a wide variety of sites including dry, gravelly prairies, gentle rocky slopes, rocky limestone outcrops and in sandy drainages. It has been observed alone or growing in association with little bluestem, green needlegrass, needle and thread, western wheatgrass, junegrass, threadleaf sedge, big bluestem and Indiangrass.

If you know of any sites where plains muhly may be growing, please contact the Bismarck Plant Materials Center at 701-250-4330 or nancy.jensen@usda.gov



Plains muhly has a bunch-type growth.

Photo by Kevin Sedivec



Seed heads of plains muhly are narrow with one seed/spikelet.

Photo by Peter M. Dziuk



Leaves of plains muhly are narrow and alternate on the stem.

Photo by Peter M. Dziuk

Plant Materials Center/Lincoln-Oakes Nursery Field Day

A Field Day will be held at the Bismarck Plant Materials Center (PMC) and Lincoln Oakes Nursery from 9:30 am (registration) to approximately 3:00 pm on August 3, 2022. Presentations will include: Cover Crops and Grazing, Keys to Successful Grass Seeding, and Pollinators 101. There will also be tours of the PMC fields and buildings along with a tour of Lincoln-Oakes Nursery. A free lunch will be provided by Lincoln-Oakes Nursery. If you are interested in attending, NRCS personnel should submit a request to attend through your supervisor. Soil Conservation District and other partners should RSVP to Julius.Sayler@usda.gov or call the PMC at 701-250-4330 by July 15, 2022.