

# Prairie Farm Wedgegrass



## Introduction

Prairie wedgegrass (*Sphenopholis obtusata*) is an important native wetland plant species. Its role as an early successional colonizer of disturbed habitat enables it to compete well with invasive and undesirable species and to provide wildlife habitat and soil stability.

## Habitat/Distribution

Prairie wedgegrass grows in sub-irrigated conditions, low-prairies, wet-meadows, marshes, stream banks, shores, dunes, moist woods, and waste places, at 0–8000 ft above sea level. Its geographic range extends from Canada through most of the United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Prairie wedgegrass is common but often overlooked because it rarely grows in dense stands.

## Description

Prairie wedgegrass is a cool season annual or short-lived perennial. Its stems are tufted to solitary, 20-130 cm tall; sheaths glabrous or hairy; ligules 1.5-2.5 mm, erose-ciliate, more or less lacerate; blades 5-14 cm long, 2-8 mm wide, usually flat; panicles 5-15 cm long, 0.5-2 cm wide, usually erect, often spikelike; spikelets densely arranged, 2.2-3.6 mm long, 2-3 flowered; glumes strongly dimorphic in size and shape, first glume is shorter and less than 1/3 as wide as the second glume, the second glume is subcucullate (wedge shaped) with a rounded to truncate apex. Wedge grass flowers from late June to August.

## Use

Prairie wedgegrass is recommended for use in native wetland seed mixes for wetland restorations, riparian buffers, stream bank stabilization, and roadside restoration. Wedgegrass can provide wildlife habitat, stabilization of disturbed areas, and act as a nurse crop for more permanent native vegetation. Prairie wedgegrass is reported to have good forage value.

## Establishment

Prairie wedgegrass is easy to establish, with few germination requirements. Wedgegrass can be drilled, broadcast, or plugged. Drilling wedgegrass with a no-till drill in early spring is especially effective. Natural seed fall from prairie wedgegrass forms a soil seed bank that enables it to regenerate quickly when soil moisture conditions are favorable.

## Availability

This is the first commercial offering of prairie wedgegrass for wetland restoration use. The source for this seed is a natural population in eastern South Dakota near Colman. Seed under the trade name “Prairie Farm Wedgegrass” is produced only at the EcoSun Prairie Farm and is marketed exclusively by Millborn Seed Company in Brookings, SD.

