



Native Warm Season Grasses

What are Native Grasses? The grasses that were here prior to European settlement. They were maintained by Native Americans, with this portion of Kentucky being tallgrass prairie. There are several native species, but the five most important are:

Big bluestem *Andropogon gerardii*
Eastern Gamma Grass *Tripsachum dactyloides*
Indian grass *Sorghastrum nutans*
Little Bluestem *Schizachyrium scoparium*
Switchgrass *Panicum virgatum*

How do they Differ From Other Grasses?

Native Warm Season Grasses are **slow to establish**, and require quality seed for a successful stand to take hold. Unlike other kinds of pasture, these grasses **flourish during the warm season** as opposed to the cool season. The **seed is very fluffy**, and at Roundstone the careful **preparation and cleaning of this seed makes up 20-30% of our operation**. This ensures that your **purchase on Pure Live Seed**.

Why use the Native Warm Season Grasses?

These grasses are **great for forage**, providing **high protien** and **improved palatability**. With Native Warm Season Grasses you **avoid the summer slump** and enjoy **high yields** with **low input requirements**. **Drought-resistant**, these **non-invasive** species **improve the health of your soil**, and are **wildlife-friendly** as well.

Establishment & Management

Best Establishment Practices

- Control the weeds!
- Plant between 4/15 and 6/30
- No lime or fertilizer during establishment
- No-till Drill is preferred
- Plant no deeper than 1/4"
- Do not graze the first year

Best Management Practices

- Be a *grass* manager, not a *cow* manager.
- Start grazing in spring once grass is 15" tall.
- Graze down to 12" and then allow the stand to rest.
- Try to maintain 18-24" the rest of the season, never grazing below 12".
- Rest periods are typically 2-4 weeks but vary by rain and seasonal growth.
- Stocking rate or grazing days should change with the growth rate of the plants. Let the vegetation tell you what to do.
- Do not let grasses get above 30 inches, as they get stemmy.
- End the year's grazing 6 weeks before frost, typically around September 1.
- If possible, burn annually!

Avoid These Three Common Mistakes –

- Getting behind on grazing
- Overgrazing
- Grazing too late

