

Warm-Season Grasses

Big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardi*)

- Native, tall, warm-season perennial grass
- Best adapted to the eastern plains from North Dakota to Texas
- Very palatable grass when harvested for hay
- Highest quality is obtainable when harvested before seed heads emerge
- Grazing is OK as long as it is not overgrazed

Eastern gamagrass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*)

- Native, warm-season, perennial grass found in tall-grass prairie
- Less drought resistant than most other native grass species, prefers wet areas
- Has a very dense root system, spreads with rhizomes
- Reasonably palatable

Blue grama – (*Bouteloua gracilis*)

- Native, warm-season, perennial grass found in the plains
- More drought resistance than most other native grass species
- Has a very dense root system
- Very palatable grass and remains nutritious into the winter months

Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)

- Native, tall growing, sod-forming warm-season, perennial grass
- Is less desirable than other warm-season grasses for grazing or hay
- Spreads by rhizomes which will cause a circle with a dead zone in the middle
- Must be burn off each spring if not harvested for hay.
- Primarily used for hay and pasture mixtures and erosion control
- For best quality, switchgrass should be harvested prior to jointing
- Best adapted to moist fertile soils but some tolerance to drought

These warm-season grasses have been used in Midwestern states for grazing purpose, but most use has been with soil conservation and wildlife refuge areas.

Additional warm season grasses that are not used in the Midwest are:

Buffalograss, Lovegrass, Carpetgrass, Centipedgrass, Pangolagrass, Rhodesgrass, Bahiagrass, Dallisgrass and Johnsongrass