

## Cane Bluestem

*Bothriochloa barbinodis* [Lag.] Herter  
plant symbol = BOBA3

Contributed by:  
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Tucson Plant Materials Center

### Alternate Names

cane beardgrass  
feather bluestem  
plains beardgrass  
pinhole bluestem

### Key Web Sites

Extensive information about this species is linked to the PLANTS web site. To access this information, go to the PLANTS web site, select this plant, and utilize the links at the bottom of the Plants Profile for this species.

### Uses

*Livestock and Wildlife:* Cane bluestem is consumed by all classes of livestock. It is considered to be good forage for wildlife and livestock. It is most palatable in the spring and summer before the stems become mature.

*Rehabilitation of Disturbed Sites:* Cane bluestem is ideal for seeding arid southwestern landscapes. It is best suited for plantings on silty or clayey soils.

*Xeriscaping:* Cane bluestem is suitable for naturalizing or as an informal border.

### Status

Cane bluestem is a native species. Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

### Description

Cane Bluestem is found in the southwestern United States and Mexico. It is a drought

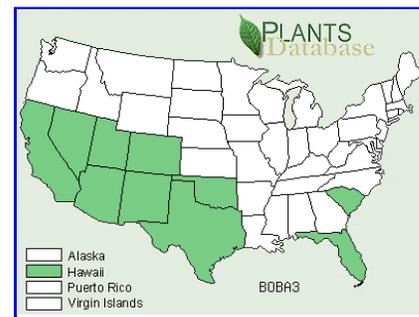


tolerant, native, perennial warm season grass. It produces leaves that are green to blue-green and may reach heights of 4 feet under optimum conditions. Cane bluestem is an indicator of good range conditions, it is one of the first grasses to disappear when rangeland is overgrazed. It is a hardy grass that produces an abundance of wind dispersed seed that readily germinate.

### Adaptation

Cane bluestem is best adapted to sandy-loam to calcereous-loam soils. It does not generally occur in dense or pure stands, but is scattered throughout an area. It may be found at elevations from 1,000 to 7,000 ft. (304 to 2,128 m). Growth of cane bluestem is dependent upon available moisture. It occurs primarily in areas where water may concentrate, which allows it to grow in areas with only 5 to 7 inches of precipitation (12 to 18 cm)

### Known Distribution



## **Establishment**

Cane bluestem germinates readily when planted from late July through early August. It should be planted into a firm seedbed at a depth of 0.25 to 0.75 inches (0.63 to 1.9 cm). As a component of a seed mix the seeding rate is 5-20% or 0.07 to 0.58 PLS lbs/acre. Establishment on disturbed sites may require mulching or supplemental irrigation.

## **Management**

Cane bluestem is considered a decreaser species and will decline if overgrazed. The presence of cane bluestem is considered an indicator of good range condition. It is palatable, productive and consumed by all classes of livestock. It is most palatable during the spring and summer.

## **Pests and Potential Problems**

Under natural conditions no pest problems have been identified. When grown for seed production thrips can reduce yield.

## **Environmental Concerns**

Cane bluestem is a native plant and may spread into adjoining areas via seed distribution. However, spread is not alarming even under optimal conditions.

## **Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)**

### *Saltillo origin*

Cane bluestem, released in 2001 by the USDA-NRCS Tucson Plant Materials Center in cooperation with the Agricultural Research Service and the University of Arizona Agricultural Experiment Station. Staff members of the Agricultural Experiment Station, College Station, Texas collected the original material between Saltillo and Torreon, Mexico. This release was selected for its superior vigor and biomass production.

## *Grant Germplasm*

This germplasm was released in 2001 by the USDA-NRCS New Mexico Plant Materials Center and New Mexico State University Agricultural Science Center at Los Lunas. USDA-NRCS field office staff collected the original material from New Mexico and Arizona. It was selected for forage yield and adaptation to higher altitudes.

## **Control**

Please contact your local agricultural extension specialist or county weed specialist to learn what works best in your area and how to use it safely. Always read label and safety instructions for each control method. Trade names and control measures appear in this document only to provide specific information. USDA, NRCS does not guarantee or warranty the products and control methods named, and other products may be equally effective.

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS <<http://plants.usda.gov>> and Plant Materials Program Web sites <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>.

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