# Plant Name: Eastern Gamagrass

**Scientific name:** *Tripsacum dactyloides* (L.) L.

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**Short Description:** Eastern Gamagrass is a native, perennial, bunchgrass known for its production of high quality livestock forage.

## Description:

Eastern Gamagrass is a native, perennial, bunchgrass known for its production of high quality livestock forage. It is a distant relative of corn and is native to most of the eastern half of the United States, but performs very well in fertile soils in the Central and Southern Great Plains. It ranges in height from 4 to 8 feet tall and reproduces by both seed and vegetatively from thick, knotty rhizome structures. Eastern Gamagrass is a monoecious species with separate male and female flowers. The seed unevenly matures and is prone to shattering. Seed production is generally quite low. Gamagrass is best planted as a monoculture when utilized for grazing because of the characteristic high palatability can easily lead to overgrazing in mixed species stands, thus the Gamagrass begins in decline and disappear. Because of the high seed dormancy issues associated with Gamagrass see “special considerations for planting” listed below.

## Taxonomic Classification:

Eastern Gamagrass

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|---|---|
| Kingdom | Plantae |
| Subkingdom | Tracheobionta |
| Superdivision | Spermatophyta |
| Division | Magnoliophyta |
| Class | Lillosida |
| Subclass | Commelinidae |
| Order | Cyperales |
| Family | Poaceae |
| Genus | *Tripsacum* |
| Species | *Tripsacum dactyloides* (L.) L. |

## Plant Characteristics:

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|---|---|
| Height: | 48 to 96 inches |
| Growth habit: | large bunchgrass with knotty rhizomes |
| Bloom period: | early summer |
| Sun requirement: | full sun |
| Leaf foliage color: | green |
| Seeds per pound: | |
| Minimum soil temperature for germination: | 65 ºF |
| Soil pH range: | 5.1 to 7.5 |
| Planting Rate: | 1 PLS lb/2000 sq ft or 12 to 20 PLS lb/acre |
| Planting Depth: | 1 to 1.5 inches |
| Panting season: | stratified seed: spring<br>non-stratified: seed winter |

*Special considerations for planting: Eastern Gamagrass has a high degree of seed dormancy. For acceptable stand establishment the seed must either be artificially stratified or planted in the fall-early winter when soil temperature is below 50 ºF and it can be naturally stratified. A frequently used technique for artificial stratification involves soaking seed held in a burlap bag in a 1% fungicide solution for 10 to 12 hrs. Allow the solution to drain from bag and store for 6 to 10 weeks at 35 to 45 ºF. Remove seed and plant while seed is wet. For more information contact us at 800-375-4613 or johnseed@johnstonseed.com.

**Use:**

Livestock: The most important use of Eastern Gamagrass is for forage. Eastern Gamagrass has been referred to "Candy on the Range" because of the highly palatable, highly nutritious forage than can be produced from a properly managed stand of Eastern Gamagrass. With proper nitrogen fertilization, 12% crude protein and yields of over 3 tons/acre can be achieved with improved varieties

Soil Conservation and Nutrient Management: Eastern Gamagrass has shown be an excellent grass for filter strip, vegetative barrier, and nutrient management. The large robust plants have the ability to uptake excess nutrients and stabilize the soil in many applications.

**Commerically Available Cultivars:**

'Verl' (released in 2005 by the USDA-Agricultural Research Service, Woodward, OK, in cooperation with the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. 'Verl' was selected for high seed set, pollen fertility and high forage production) See more information on 'Verl' under Grasses in the menu.
'Pete' (released by USDA, NRCS Plant Materials Center in Manhattan, KS)
'Iuka IV' (released by USDA, ARS Southern Plains Range Research Station in Woodward, OK)