



Segoe Lily

Newsletter of the Utah Native Plant Society

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JAN/FEB 2004

Drought Tolerant Grasses

Contributions from Paula Mohadjer, Therese Meyer and Margaret Malm

January is a funny time to be talking about grass, especially with so much snow blanketing the ground! UNPS has been receiving enquiries about drought tolerant grasses from all over the state for the past few months so this information could help you to get a jump on spring planting.

There are a few nice turfgrasses that can be used in the Salt Lake Valley instead of the traditional Kentucky bluegrass lawn. Kentucky bluegrass is a cool season grass that requires 25-35" of water annually, while the Salt Lake Valley receives an average of only 15" annually, most of which comes in the winter months. Alternative turf grasses offer a range of color and texture and provide considerable water savings, giving you the opportunity to choose according to your preferences and site requirements.

Buffalograss (*Buchloe dactyloides*) is a warm season grass that is blue green and very soft while actively growing (late May through early October). Buffalograss goes dormant (brown) when temperatures drop (late October to early May) It tolerates considerable traffic when green, less when dormant. It requires no additional irrigation, although supplemental irrigation, once every 12-14 days, will keep it greener in the summer months. This grass tolerates compacted soils and prefers clay soils. Buffalograss can be mowed at 2-4" or left to its natural height of 4-6".

Buffalograss



This grass spreads by runners (which could cause minor problems during raking or sports) and can be grown from seed, sod or plugs. Commercially available plugs generally consist of a selection of female plants, as these have very short flowering spikes that are below the level of the blades and thus do not show.

When starting from seed, wait until end of May or when temperatures reach 75 degrees or above. Seed planting will have both male and female plants, and the male spikes are taller and some consider them unsightly. No mowing is required unless more water is applied so that the blades grow long, or to remove male seed heads.

Seed or plugs are available from

Biograss Sod Farms in Sandy (801) 562-9090,
Or High Country Gardens in New Mexico (800) 925-9387
or website highcountrygardens.com

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Drought Tolerant Grasses

Utah's Choice - Dreams Do Become Reality

Events and Chapter News

Drought Tolerant Grasses cont

Blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*) is a warm season Utah native grass that is blue green and soft-textured while actively growing. It is similar to Buffalograss in that it goes dormant (brown) during the cool parts of the year (Oct to May), so the primary complaint is the late greening-up.



It tolerates considerable traffic while actively growing, less while dormant. Blue grama survives on 10" annual precipitation and requires no additional irrigation, although supplemental irrigation, once every 12-14 days, will keep it greener in the summer months. It can be mowed or left un-mowed for a natural prairie look about 18" tall. Blue grama is a bunch grass and is easiest to start from seed once temperatures are above 85°. Seed is available from High Country Gardens, and possible local Utah sources.

Crested Wheatgrass is a drought tolerant, cool season bunchgrass that prefers going dormant during hot, dry periods. Crested Wheat grass survives very well on 12-16" of annual precipitation and actually competes poorly with other plants on moist sites. It forms a thick, dense sod once established, that does well without irrigation.

Keeping this grass mowed to a height of 3" or above will produce a nice green sod during its growing season (fall and spring). Seeds are started very easily at a wide range of temperatures and quickly form fibrous roots which can penetrate the soil to depths of 3 to 8 feet deep at maturity.

Fescue. Many types of fescues are used in conjunction with or as a substitute look-alikes for Kentucky bluegrass, such as turf-type tall fescue (**Farundinacea**; some examples varieties are 'Bonsai' and 'Lion'). Tall fescue is one of the grasses recommended for the area down around St George, builders are now being urged to use fescue when they put in lawns.

Fescues tolerate shade and recover well after drought. They are cold-hardy and retain most of their green color through winter. If mowed, cut no shorter than 3" to ensure high disease resistance and weed control; cutting lower causes stress and increased disease and weed infiltration. Fescue varieties grow slowly in moderately heavy clay soils and only require between 8-14" of precipitation annually depending on variety.



Turtleturf® is a cool season, shade tolerant, bunch grass that is slower growing than Kentucky bluegrass, requiring less maintenance and less fertilizer. Turtleturf® is a relatively new grass and water needs for growing it in the Salt Lake area are under evaluation; a preliminary estimate puts its water needs relatively close to the Fescues. This grass isn't recommended for high traffic areas due to its very slow growth.

Sideoats grama is a warm season Utah native grass that is gray-green in . It can survive with as little as 8" of rainfall a year, however, supplemental watering once a month during hot summers will keep the grass more attractive. Un-mowed, it will grow to 24", for a natural prairie look.

Mowed at 3" or above, it forms a bunchgrass sod, spreading by tiller rhizomes. Sideoats grama tolerates dry, drought conditions and grows in any soil type. Sideoats grama is a long-lived, fine textured perennial adapted to rocky slopes, dry areas, and alkaline conditions. Seeding once the soil has warmed up produces an excellent stand. This warm season grass remains green in a similar time period to Blue grama and doesn't tolerate high traffic while dormant.

All the grasses discussed above with the exception of Sideoats grama are displayed with metered irrigation at the JVVCD Demonstration Gardens.

Not Recommended

Bermuda grass. Although it is drought tolerant. It is also reported to be too invasive (it crowds out native grasses), is very hard to keep control of and even harder to eradicate. The texture is also quite wiry.

Utah's Choice - Dreams Do Become Reality

Susan Meyer, UNPS Horticulture Chair

The Intermountain Native Plant Growers Association (INPGA) was founded less than a year ago by former UNPS board member and Wildland Nursery owner Janett Warner, along with friends both inside the Utah nursery industry and in the public sector. Since that time, the organization has gone into high gear to promote its chief agenda item, the Utah's Choice plant tagging and consumer education program. The membership has grown from just a handful of founding members to include individuals representing at least thirty different nursery and landscaping businesses in three states. The first all-membership meeting was held in September 2003 at the Utah Botanical Center in Kaysville, and was attended by nearly fifty people, almost all nursery professionals.



INPGA members relax and network during a break at the first annual all-membership meeting.

Plans were made at the Kaysville meeting for a variety of activities designed to increase the availability of native plants in the retail nursery trade and to encourage their use in landscaping. These included establishment of a Seed Bank to increase the availability of seeds of native plants to INPGA member growers, as well as developing ideas for stock block plantings maintained by member-growers to ensure continuing availability of hard-to-obtain seeds over the long term. The Seed Bank project for 2003 made seeds of 24 Utah's Choice species available to members, with total sales of over 300,000 seeds. INPGA member Lone Peak State Conservation Nursery agreed to store the seed inventory and handle the orders. The tagging program has also taken off, with over 25,000 plant tags sold to wholesale growers. We can expect to see substantial numbers of Utah's Choice tagged plants in retail nurseries this coming season.

For the initial promotional effort, thousands of full color Utah's Choice information brochures were distributed free

of charge to Water Conservancy Districts, USU Extension Offices, the Utah Division of Water Resources, Red Butte Garden, and other key players. To follow up on this good start, we are targeting the Utah Green Conference, the annual meeting of the Utah Nursery and Landscaping Association to be held this January in St. George.

In addition to the INPGA booth, which will feature our new retail marketing package, we will be participating in a half-day symposium on native plants in the Utah Green Industry.

Activities on the part of two of our partner organizations have helped us considerably in our efforts to raise visibility for native plant landscaping. The first was the publication of the book 'Water Wise: Native Plants for Intermountain Landscapes' by Utah State University Press in June 2003.

This beautiful book, written by faculty and MLA students at USU under the umbrella of the Center for Water Efficient Landscaping, goes a long way toward filling the knowledge gap for people interested in these plants and their uses in the landscape. It includes color photos and fact sheets for over 200 Intermountain native plants. The second important development was the launching of the Virtual Garden native and waterwise plant online database by the Central Utah Water Conservancy District <http://pc100.cuwcd.com/gardendemo/>

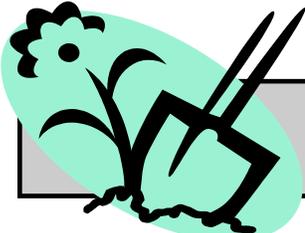
Though still incomplete, this website promises to be the most-used resource for people looking for information on landscaping with native plants, including names of nurseries where each species can be purchased locally.

INPGA has benefited from cash and in kind contributions from a number of organizations, including the USU Utah Botanical Center and Center for Water-Efficient Landscaping, the Central Utah Water Conservancy District, the Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, the Utah Division of Water Resources, and the Utah Native Plant Society. But most of the work of the organization is carried out by dedicated volunteers, including our elected officers:

Amy Howa Croft, President, Michelle Cook, Secretary, and especially Linda Oswald, Treasurer. Janett Warner and myself act as Executive Directors of the Utah's Choice Program, with advice from an Executive Committee that includes the above officers along with Roger Kjelgren of USU, Robert Johnson of Great Basin Natives, and Edie Trimmer of the Lone Peak State Conservation Nursery. A long awaited event took place in mid-December 2003--the launching of our dedicated

website at www.utahschoice.org. Check it out for pictures of the Utah's Choice plant lineup, information about INPGA, instructions on how to obtain promotional materials, and links to partner websites and other resources. Our site too is still in its infancy, but we hope to build it into another useful web resource over the coming months.

The most important thing you all can do right now to help get more respect for Utah native plants is to go to your favorite retail nursery and ask for Utah's Choice. It would also be great if you could call in to the KSL Garden Show and ask pointed questions about our program!



Events and Chapter News

Utah Native Plant Propagation Workshops

(NOTE: at press time we were attempting to achieve a discount for attendance by UNPS members since the workshops outlined below are co-sponsored by UNPS and were developed by UNPS and spearheaded by our horticultural chair and past chairperson, Dr. Susan Meyer. We suggest that when registering, indicate that you are a UNPS member and request a \$5 discount.)

\$20, general public. \$15, Utah Master Gardeners (active members only).

Utah Native Plant Society and Utah State University Extension Master Gardeners are cooperating to present Utah native plant propagation workshops in 2004.

Plant seeds of Utah native plants chosen to perform well in your landscape. Seedlings will grow into a beautiful, water-conserving assortment of plants. Every participant will plant 72 cells in a special book-trainer tray, and take it home with instructions on how to grow and transplant the plants successfully. Available seeds will include: Cliffrose, Bitterbrush, Alkali Sacaton, Utah Yucca, Shining Muttongrass, James Buckwheat, Gooseberryleaf Globemallow, Utah Sweetvetch, Prince's Plume, and Mountain Big Sagebrush.

Register for classes by calling the USU Extension in the county holding the class.

Salt Lake: 801-468-3179;
Davis: 801-451-3204;
Thanksgiving Point: 801-768-7443;
Cache Co.: 435-752-6263.

Class dates and locations:

Salt Lake County:

February 17, Tuesday. 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM. Mt. Jordan Middle School, 9360S 300 E, Sandy.

February 21, Saturday, 9AM - 11AM, Cactus and Tropicals, 2735 S 2000 E, SLC.

February 24, Tuesday. 5:30 - 7:30PM. Salt Lake County Govt Bldg, 2001 S State St., SLC. Room S-1007-8.

February 28, Saturday. 9AM - 11AM. Murray City Park, 53rd S and State St, Murray.

March 6, Saturday. 1PM - 4PM. 3540 S Market St (2820 W), West Valley City.

March 10, Wednesday. 6PM - 9PM. Sandy City's Lone Peak Pavilion, 700 E 10140 S, Sandy.

Cache County:

March 6, Saturday. 9AM - 11AM. USU Teaching Greenhouse, Logan.

March 10, Wednesday. 6PM - 8PM. USU Teaching Greenhouse, Logan.

Thanksgiving Garden Visitor Center:

March 13, Saturday. 9AM - 11AM. Garden Center classroom.

Davis County:

March 13, Saturday. 9AM - 11AM. Utah Botanical Center.

General contact re: the above

Maggie Wolf 801-468-3171

maggiew@ext.usu.edu

www.usuextension.slco.org

Chapter News

The **Utah Valley** Chapter last met November 21, 2003.

As the program, we invited members to share their photos and slides with the group, and to donate some for the chapter's use. Lyle Jensen, Kim Despain and Denise Van Keuren showed many great images of Utah flowers and landscapes in a variety of formats. Lyle donated use of a CD of some of his wonderful jpeg images, that will be used for UNPS publications and presentations.

The chapter's planned dates for 2004 meetings are: February 20, May 21, August 20 and November 19, 2004, all Friday evenings.

Pot luck dinners will start at 6 p.m., and the meeting starts at 7 p.m. The meeting place is the Federal Building, corner of 100 West and 100 North in Provo.

Speakers haven't been decided upon yet.

Also on the planning board for 2004 are several field trips, a garden tour, a propagation workshop and continuing work with partners to promote heritage gardens, vegetative restoration, fighting weed invasions and public education.

Check your records, and if your membership has expired (many have!) please rejoin now!"

Position in Boise with BLM Fire Science

Vacancy Announcement Number: BLM/FA-04-10-DE

Opening Date: Wednesday, November 26, 2003

Closing Date: Thursday, January 15, 2004

Position: **Joint Fire Science Program Manager**

Series & Grade: GS-0401-14/15

Promotion Potential: 15

Salary: 79,344.00 USD Annually

Duty Locations: 1 vacancy - Boise, ID

Remarks: One permanent full-time position - Open to all qualified U.S. citizens. - Applications submitted by mail or hand delivered must be received in our office by close of business (4:30 pm Mountain Standard Time) on the closing date of the announcement.

Get the full details at

<http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/getjob.asp?JobID=20016939>

Report on Annual Members Meeting

Our annual meeting in Logan went very well. The new world food and decor were wonderful and Dr. Shaw's talk on pollination was very interesting.

Many thanks to Steve, Tami, Dave, Geno, Jackie and the rest of the Logan Chapter for putting on the best meeting in years. We also toured the Intermountain Herbarium, thanks to Michael for opening up on Saturday and giving us the grand tour.

And yes all of the old board members (who wanted to be) and chapter presidents were reelected along with a few new volunteers.

Expert to teach Grass Workshop

Dr. Mary Barkworth, world expert in the Grass Taxonomy, is leading a Grass Workshop for UNPS.

When: 9 a.m - 4 p.m., Saturday, January 31, 2004 (note: this is a re-scheduled date)

Where: Intermountain Herbarium (below Junction Cafeteria, USU Campus, Logan Utah)

Cost: \$10 (UNPS members), \$15 (non-members) payable to the Intermountain Herbarium

Outline: Grasses, grass structures, common genera, some keying, including use of an interactive key

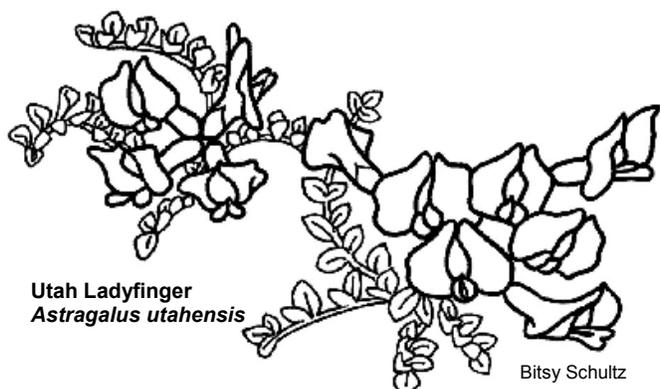
Sign up? mary@biology.usu.edu or call 435-797-0061 or check out the UNPS Website at

<http://www.unps.org/miscpdf/grassworkshop.pdf>

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Utah Native Plant Society Membership and Information

New Member Renewal Gift

Name: _____
Street: _____
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Zip: _____ Phone _____
Email: _____

Check membership category desired:

- Student \$9.00
 - Senior \$12.00
 - Individual \$15.00
 - Household \$25.00
 - Sustaining \$40.00
 - Supporting Org. \$55.00
 - Corporate \$250.00 and up
 - Lifetime \$250.00
- Please send a complimentary copy of the Se-go Lily to the above individual.

Please enclose a check, payable to Utah Native Plant Society and send it to:

Membership
Utah Native Plant Society
P.O.Box 520041
Salt Lake City, Utah 84152-0041

For more information about the Utah Native Plant Society call:

Bill King: 582-0432
Susan Garvin: 356-5108
Larry Meyer: 272-3275
Or write to: unps@unps.org

**Check out our
website!**
www.unps.org

Many thanks to Xmission for sponsoring the Utah Native Plant Society website.

Please direct all suggestions, articles and events for the newsletter to Paula Longhurst at scoobydo@xmission.com
The deadline for next issue is Feb 16th 2004

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