

Common and Scientific Names of Grasses in this Brochure

- Arizona Cottontop.....*Digitaria californica*
- Blue Grama.....*Bouteloua gracilis*
- Cane Beardgrass.....*Bothriochloa barbinodis*
- Green Sprangletop.....*Leptochloa dubia*
- Hairy Grama.....*Bouteloua hirsuta*
- Sideoats Grama.....*Bouteloua curtipendula*
- Tanglehead.....*Heteropodon contortus*
- Vine mesquite.....*Panicum obtusum*
- Wolftail.....*Lycurus setosus*



Other Common Native Grasses found in the Sonoita Plain*

- Big Sacaton.....*Sporobolus wrightii*
- Black Grama.....*Bouteloua eriopoda*
- Bullgrass.....*Muhlenbergia emersleyi*
- Curly Mesquite.....*Hilaria belangeri*
- Deergrass.....*Muhlenbergia rigens*
- Fluffgrass.....*Erioneuron pulchellum*
- Hall's Panicum.....*Panicum hallii*
- Plains Bristlegrass.....*Setaria macrostachya*
- Plains Lovegrass.....*Eragrostis intermedia*
- Poverty Threawn.....*Aristida divaricata*
- Sprucetop Grama.....*Bouteloua chondrosioides*

*This is just a partial list—there are more than 100 species of grass in the Sonoita Plain!

More information about grasses and other native plants can be found in:

Arizona Range Grasses, by Robert R. Humphrey, published by the University of Arizona Press

Grasses of the Southwestern United States, written by Frank W. Gould and published by the University of Arizona Press

Grasses of Southeastern Arizona, produced by Coronado RD & D Area, Inc., and Conservations Districts of Southeastern Arizona

Manual of the Grasses of the United States (2 volumes), written by A.S. Hitchcock and currently printed by Dover Publications

Plants of Arizona, by Anne Orth Epple, published by LewAnn Publishing Company

and check out:

Arizona Native Plant Society: www.aznps.org

USDA Plants Database: <http://plants.usda.gov>

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Native Grasses of the Sonoita Plain



Blue Grama

Bouteloua gracilis

Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch

Grasses hold the ecosystem together! Native grasses provide food and habitat for wildlife, and protect the soil from erosion.

Grasses are flowering plants, but there are no brightly colored petals on the flowers. The easiest time to identify grasses is when they are in flower or have produced seeds.



This drawing of **Sideoats Grama** shows the typical aboveground parts of a grass plant: the inflorescence and seedheads, the stems, and the leaf blades.

Sideoats Grama is a perennial bunchgrass whose seedheads often hang on one side of the stem. This grass may be 2-3 ft tall.

Blue Grama, also shown on the front page, is usually not as tall as Sideoats, and the seedheads are quite different. There are only 1-4 per stem, and they are shaped like a toothbrush or eyebrow!

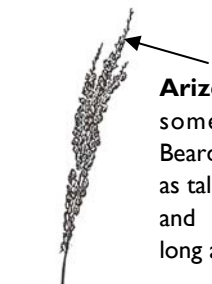
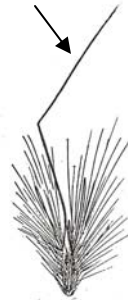


Hairy Grama is often mistaken for blue grama, but if you look carefully at the seedhead, you'll see that the rachis (where the seeds are attached) extends 1/4" or more beyond the seeds.



Cane Beardgrass, also known as Cane Bluestem, can grow as tall as 4 feet. In the fall, the plant cures to a beautiful red-orange. The seeds are in tufts of silvery hairs and each seed has a crooked awn (a stiff, hairlike projection) up to 1 inch long.

Some people say that Cane Beardgrass smells like blueberries!



Arizona Cottontop is sometimes mistaken for Cane Beardgrass, but this species is usually not as tall and, while the seedheads are white and fluffy, Arizona Cottontop has no long awns.



Vine Mesquite has big, almost round seeds that quail and doves enjoy. This plant sends out runners (stolens) that root where they touch the soil and produce new plants. Sometimes these stolens are 6-8 feet long! This plant may be less than a foot tall, but can grow to 30 inches if conditions are right.



Tanglehead earns its name from the coarse, twisted awns that turn black and tangle with one another when the seeds are mature. In the fall, the plants turn orange-brown.



Wolftail receives its common name from the narrow seedhead with many short awns. The plant is generally less than 2 feet tall, and the leaves are usually grayish-green.

Green Sprangletop can grow to be 4 feet tall in areas with plenty of soil moisture. Each stem will produce up to 15 branches that are loaded with seeds. Small birds perch on the stems and harvest the seeds!

