



DOUGLASS KING SEED CO.

Falfurrias Germplasm

Big Sacaton

(*Sporobolus wrightii*)



Big sacaton is a native, warm-season grass that forms dense clumps. It is a coarse, upright bunchgrass that can grow from 3 to 8 feet tall. Leaves width can range from 1 to 2 1/2 inches wide and can grow up to 1 foot long. The pale flowers of big sacaton form in stiff, upright clusters 1 to 2 feet long.

Establishment/Management: Seeding should occur in early spring. Where there are few cool-season weeds, big sacaton can also be seeded in the fall. Seedbed preparation should begin well in advance of planting. Establish a clean, weed-free seedbed by either tillage or herbicides. Prior to planting, the site should be firm and have accumulated soil moisture.

Big sacaton can be seeded using a grass drill with a small seed box. Broadcast seeding may be used in areas not easily planted with a drill, but additional practices to encourage good seed to soil contact, such as cultipacking and harrowing, may be necessary after planting. Sand can be mixed with seed to aid in distribution.

Seed should be planted 1/8 to 1/4 inch deep. It is better to plant too shallow than too deep. A seeding rate of 1/2 to 1 pound of pure live seed (PLS) per acre is recommended. This corresponds to planting 20 to 40 live seeds per square foot. Plants can also be grown in small containers and then transplanted for establishment of vegetative barriers in concentrated flow areas. On saline soils, weed-free mulch can be used to improve establishment. Establishment is highly dependent on good rainfall or irrigation.

Big sacaton should not be grazed within the first year of planting. It will benefit from an annual mowing at an 18-24 inch height when used as a vegetative barrier or herbaceous wind barrier and not subjected to grazing pressure.

Adaptation/Use: Big sacaton grows primarily on heavier soils in lowland or wetland sites. It is tolerant of highly alkaline and saline soil, and can tolerate poorly drained soils and seasonally flooded areas. The plant is also found on open areas such as rocky slopes, plateaus, and mesas.

It is used in pure stands or as part of a rangeland seeding mix for highly alkaline soils. The plant is useful for revegetating saline soils throughout the Southwest and is a beneficial plant for erosion control conservation practices such as vegetative barriers or herbaceous wind barriers. Big sacaton is an effective alternative plant for stabilizing watershed structures and flood plain areas. It is also useful for wildlife cover.

Adaptation/Use (continued): The Falfurrias Germplasm release of big sacaton was chosen because of its ability to produce abundant forage, especially on droughty, alkaline, and saline sites and its ability to produce nutritious green forage throughout the winter months in south Texas.

Seed Quality Traits and Tips

There are approximately 2,000,000 seeds per pound of big sacaton. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office for assistance in developing a Prescribed Grazing Plan if it will be utilized for grazing.



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