PRAIRIE THREEAWN  
*Aristida oligantha* Michx.  
Plant Symbol = AROL

Contributed By: USDA NRCS National Plant Data Center

**Warning:** Can be mechanically injurious to livestock.

**Alternate Names**  
oldfield three-awn, oldfield 3-awn

**Uses**  
Prairie threeawn has little value as a forage grass. After maturity, seeds get in the wool of sheep and in the eyes of both cattle and sheep if they graze areas with a dense stand. This grass establishes easily under adverse conditions and protects soil against erosion until more desirable grasses take over. It is an indicator of deteriorated range condition.

**Status**  
Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant’s current status, such as, state noxious status and wetland indicator values.

**Description**  
Prairie threeawn is a native, cool-season, annual grass. The height is between 6 and 20 inches. The leaf blade is flat, about 1/4 inch wide, and rolls inward during hot, dry weather. The leaf sheath is mostly basal. The seedhead is a loose, open panicle; glumes have three awns about 1-1/2 to 3 inches long that curve at the base.

**Distribution:** For current distribution, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

**Management**  
Range reseeding with perennial grasses is the most practical and economical way to reduce this grass and improve ranges for livestock production.

**Establishment**  
Prairie threeawn growth starts in early spring from seed. The life cycle is one month to 6 weeks. Prairie threeawn is a good seed producer. The seedlings are vigorous. It grows readily on areas, such as old abandoned fields, oil-well locations, and cattle round-up grounds.

**Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)**  
Please contact your local NRCS Field Office.

**Reference**  

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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 Web site [http://plants.usda.gov](http://plants.usda.gov) or the Plant Materials Program Web site [http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov](http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov)
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