ARIZONA COTTONTOP
Digitaria californica (Benth.) Henr.
Plant Symbol = DICA8

Contributed By: USDA NRCS National Plant Data Center

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
Grass Family (Poaceae). Arizona cottontop is native, warm-season, perennial bunch grass. The height ranges from 1-1/2 to 2 feet. The leaf blade is flat, narrow, and usually less than 5 inches long. The leaf sheath is covered with small hairs. The stem has swollen base, scaly, and hairy. The seedhead is an open panicle. The second glume and sterile lemma are covered with long white (occasionally purple) hairs, giving it a silky cottony appearance after the seed ripens.

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

Management
To keep Arizona cottontop vigorous and maintain it in the plant community, defer grazing 60 to 70 days every 2 to 3 years before seed maturity. No more than 50 percent of current year’s growth by weight should be removed by grazing.

Establishment
It grows rapidly following late spring and summer rains and continues to grow as long as moisture is available. It reproduces primarily from seed and usually produces a good seed crop. Seed remain viable for as long as 10 years. It seldom grows in pure stands and grows best on gravelly and sandy loam soils.

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

Reference

Prepared By & Species Coordinator:
Percy Magee, USDA NRCS National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
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> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Read about Civil Rights at the Natural Resources Conservation Service.