

side-oats grama *Bouteloua curtipendula*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Liliopsida

Order: Cyperales

Family: Poaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Side-oats grama is also known as tall grama and mesquite grass. This perennial plant is classified as a mid-height grass. Its simple, entire leaves are arranged alternately along the stem. The leaf blades are flat and have dead, curly tips. The dead tip is about one-fourth to one-third the length of the blade. The leaves often have dark marks on them. The leaf margins have hairlike structures, each of which has a gland at the base. The flowers have orange anthers. Flowers are borne on slender stalks. The fruit is a grain, and the seed heads are one-sided. Side-oats grama may attain a height of one to three feet.

BEHAVIORS

Side-oats grama may be found in the northern one-half of Illinois and in the Mississippi River border counties. It grows in dry prairies and on dry hills. Flowers are produced from July through September. This plant is an important food source for grazing species of the prairie. Stems turn red in the fall.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; gravel prairie; hill prairie

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