

Purpletop – *Tridens flavus*



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Habitat Notes:

Fields, pastures, roadsides, clearings, and other open, disturbed habitats; also scattered in varied natural woodlands and barrens.

Species Identification:

- Height 2-6 feet
- Sheaths compressed-keeled, mostly glabrous.
- Blades 3-10mm wide, elongate, attenuate and involute apically, glabrous or sparsely hispid; collars pubescent, bearded at summit; ligules to 0.5mm.
- Panicles 15-40 x 3-30 cm, nodding distally, showy viscid; branches 10-25 cm, strongly divergent to drooping, flexible.
- Spikelets 5-10mm, on pedicels mostly < 3mm long, scarcely compressed, greenish to straw colored to coppery purplish, with 4-9 florets.

Cultural Conditions:

- Full sun to part shade
- Clay soil, high organic matter, loam, silt, shallow rocky
- Good drainage, moist, occasionally dry

Ecological Benefits:

- Wildlife: Wild turkey and bobwhite quail consume seeds and it provides nesting material throughout the year.
- Host plant for the crossline skipper, little glassywing, and broadwinged skipper.
- Fair forage value and is grazed early in the season

Growing Protocol:

- Seed stratification: C(60)
 - 60 day cold moist stratification. Keep at temperature range of 33-38 degrees for duration of stratification.
 - Add water to stratification media periodically to ensure seeds do not dry out.
 - If direct seeding, broadcast in the winter to spring. Seed drilling should be done at a rate of 40+ seeds per linear foot.

Collection Information:

- Shattering pods. Seeds need to be collected prior to dispersal.
- Shake into a bag or cut the stem and collect the entire stalk before seeds are dispersed.
- Grasping the base of the inflorescence and pulling up the stalk can be a good way to collect seeds.
- Plant will be light brown when seeds are ready.
- Fall to early winter is best for collection.

Pests & Disease:

- Susceptible to sorghum midge (*Contarinia sorghicola*) larvae that eat the seeds.
- Purpletop tridens borer (*Eurytomocharis triodiae*) can bore into stems damaging the seed production.
- Aphid species (*Hysteroneura setariae* and *Hyalopteroides humilis*) feed on the foliage and decrease productivity.