

Summer 2021

Native Seed Scoop, Summer 2021

University of Northern Iowa. Tallgrass Prairie Center.

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Recommended Citation

University of Northern Iowa. Tallgrass Prairie Center., "Native Seed Scoop, Summer 2021" (2021). *Native Seed Scoop*. 2.

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Tallgrass Prairie

CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

www.tallgrassprairiecenter.org

Native Seed Scoop - Summer 2021



Events

Panel Discussion – Native Seed: A Landowner’s Perspective

- Friday, July 16, 2021 from 1:00 to 2:30 pm, online via Zoom, hosted by the TPC
- [Details and registration](#)

National Conference on Ecological Restoration (NCER)

- Online, July 26-29, and August 2-5, 2021
- [Details and registration](#)

Iowa Prairie Conference – Prairie Kinship

- Online talks - Saturday, July 31, 2021
- Field trips - Sunday, August 1, 2021
- [Details and registration](#)

Iowa Roadside Conference

- Wednesday, September 8 through Friday, September 10, 2021 in Decorah, Iowa
- [Details and registration](#)

Tallgrass Prairie Center Updates

Job opening at the TPC

Full consideration deadline for the [Prairie on Farms Program Manager position](#) is July 9, but we will continue accepting applications until the position is filled.

TPC Plant Materials Program Update

We produce Iowa source-identified founder seed for native seed growers and seek to improve communication across the native seed supply chain. Our efforts have shifted over time from generating new ecotypes to refreshing our existing seed bank of over 80 species (with one to three ecotypes of each species).

We store reserved seed from first generation plots, grown from the 1990s through 2010s, and use that to grow out fresh seed when our founder seed supply diminishes or loses viability. We are learning more about how well different species perform both in the field and in storage and are using that to rotate species in and out of production.



The species we started in 2021 include Baptisia alba (left) and Desmodium illinoense, shown here as greenhouse seedlings (Baptisia photo credit: Aaron Sanderson, Green Iowa AmeriCorps Land and Water Steward). We have since transplanted them into production fields and are working to keep them alive despite drought conditions.

We are starting to scout for populations of potential new species in Iowa remnant prairies. We have heard from growers and key seed consumers that the following groups are of interest: cool season native grasses and sedges, early season forbs, and late season forbs.

If there are species you would like to have commercially available as source-identified seed for Iowa and neighboring states, please email me: laura.walter@uni.edu.

Native Seed News on the Web

[Palmer Amaranth in Iowa: Past, Present, and Future](#)

[“CRP – What’s New” Fact Sheet from USDA](#)

[Climate informed seed sourcing strategies and new research by a Nature Conservancy team](#)

High crop prices may affect new CRP enrollment. Copy and paste URL to view this article: <https://www.agweb.com/news/business/conservation/will-high-prices-hinder-usdas-crp-goal>

Seed Test Variability Evaluated

“Uniformity Presents Challenges for Testing: Industry survey examines variation in

seed test results from seed testing laboratories” – Read full article in the [June 2021 issue of SeedWorld](#)

Summary:

The Association of American Seed Control Officials (AASCO) and partnering organizations carried out a formal study of seed test variability in 2019. The team submitted samples of nine seed lots, with selected weed seed added at known quantities, to twelve seed testing labs. Three native species were included: big bluestem, Indiangrass, and purple prairie clover.

Purity estimates were fairly consistent across labs, though some errors in noxious weed identification occurred at most of the labs. Estimates of total viability varied among labs, and “outlier labs” provided results outside the typical range.

The study suggests the need for the following:

- Reporting of methods used, especially when multiple methods are permitted in the rules.
- More consistent reporting of results and procedures, especially for TZ and germination tests.
- Education to improve analyst expertise in viability tests and weed seed identification.
- Collaboration among seed labs, the seed industry, and regulatory groups in dealing with outlier labs.

Survey of Native Seed and Plant Consumers

Read full report here: [Native Plant Materials Use And Commercial Availability In The Eastern United States](#)

The survey was conducted by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Seed Bank but the report contains transferable ideas for other regions:

- Respondents cite commercial availability as the largest single barrier to using

local ecotype seed.

- Seed consumers who prefer “local” seed still end up buying seed from outside their region.
- The authors suggest several ways for improving the commercial availability of local ecotype seed.

Native Seed Highlights from SER2021

There were numerous presentations and workshops related to native seed at the recent [SER2021 World Conference on Ecological Restoration](#), held online June 21-24. Topics of discussion included strategies for **scaling up seed availability** to meet increasing restoration needs, **seed provenance** issues and research gaps, and **setting and implementing standards** for native seed production and use at national and regional scales.

