



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Old World Bluestem (OWB)

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OWB



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□ Two Primary OWBs in Kansas

- Caucasion bluestem (*Bothriochloa bladhii*)
 - Warm season perennial grass native to subtropical Asia and Africa
- Yellow Bluestem (*Bothriochloa ischaemum*)
 - Warm season perennial from southern Europe and Asia

(Both introduced into the United States in the early 1900's)

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☐ **Caucasion Bluestem**

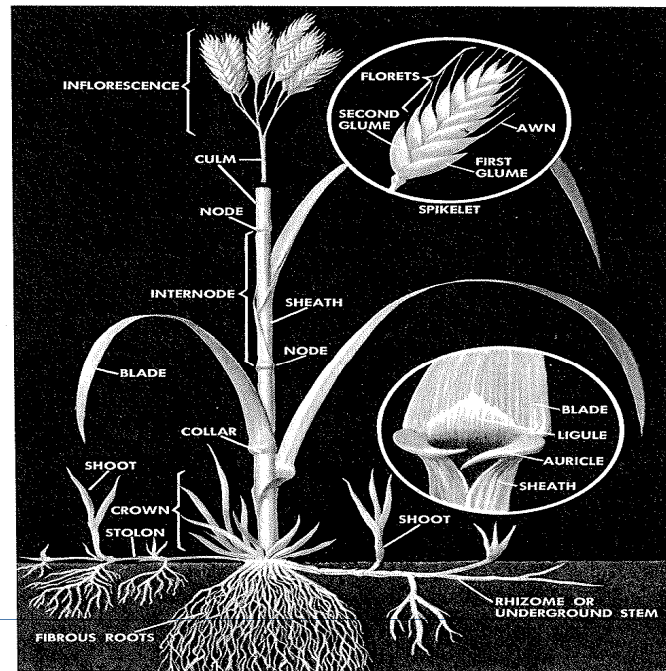
- Small blue-gray graceful grass, with flowering stems that can reach one to three feet high
- Forms dense tufts of blue-green smooth leaf blades up to 12 inches long and less than a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide with a thickened mid-vein
- Nodes are purple-tinged and may be smooth or with short hairs

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□ Yellow Bluestem

- Larger than Caucasian bluestem, and has yellow-green leaves that are usually smooth
- Sheaths are rounded and blades are flat or folded
- Nodes may be smooth or with short hairs

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□ OWB Spread

- Both grasses spread by root and by seed
- Length of seed viability in the soil is unknown
- May be spread by machine, animal, or wind
 - Be extremely cautious where machines, vehicles, and livestock have been or where they come from
 - Origination of hay

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❑ Problems on the landscape

- Not preferred as much by grazing livestock especially cattle, in comparison to native bluestem species
- Tolerates extreme grazing pressure
- Prolific seed producer

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□ Problems on the landscape

- Very drought tolerant
- Alters soil function (carbon-to-nitrogen ratio that inhibits the growth of native plants)

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Photo by Doug Spencer

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Photo by Doug Spencer

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Photo by Alex Miller

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❑ **Problems on the landscape**

- Seems to accelerate erosion on rangelands
- Often invades or occupies difficult control areas in pastures or rangeland
- Costly? (stay tuned for presentations to follow)

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□ Previous attempts to control

- Spot treatment approach
 - Earth scorch approach
 - Fire and non-selective herbicide
 - Mixed results
- Future
 - Selective herbicide approach

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□ NRCS Position on OWB

- Extreme concern
- Challenging resource concern
- Scout pastures for evidence of OWB presence
- Catch and treat

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□ NRCS Position on OWB

- Evolving approach to treatment/management/control
- Follow Kansas State University recommendations and product label
- Payment Schedule Scenarios
 - EQIP (Grazinglands)

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□ Information sources and references:

- USDA Plants Database
- Kansas State University
- Missouri Department of Conservation

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