

## GRASSES

### Wildrye, Canada 'Mandan'

*Elymus canadensis* 'Mandan'

Native. NRCS selection made in Morton County, ND. A cool-season perennial with whimsical drooping seedheads. Easy to grow in average to moist soil. Seedheads provide winter interest in the garden or landscape. Grows 2-4' tall.

**Description:** Canada wildrye is a cool-season, short-lived perennial, tufted grass (rarely with short rhizomes), 2 to 5 feet tall, with a drooping spike at the end of the culm. Several, few-seeded spikelets may arise at a single node of the spike. Lemmas have long awns curving outward at maturity. Leaves are broad, 4 to 10 inches long, and with large auricles. Heads and leaves turn russet to tan as plants cure in late summer.

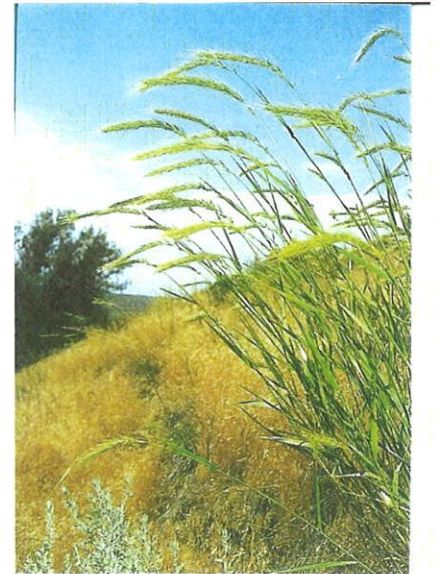
**Distribution/Habitat:** Distribution of this native is extensive throughout Canada, across the United States excluding only a few southeastern states, and into northern Mexico. In the more humid eastern part of the Great Plains, it can be found on prairie uplands, whereas in semi-arid central and eastern parts it is confined to stream banks and shaded or otherwise relatively wet areas.

**Comments:** When moisture conditions are favorable, Canada wildrye will grow throughout the summer or regrow in the autumn. Although other wildryes occur in the state, this one is most abundant. It is best adapted to medium textured soils but will grow in most soils of both prairie and forest. Although seldom abundant, forage value when green and growing is rated good for cattle and horses and fair for sheep and wildlife. Canada wildrye, including the variety 'Mandan,' is used to some extent in rangeland seeding mixtures, establishing easily.

**Credit:** James E. Johnson & Gary E. Larson, Grassland Plants of South Dakota and the Northern Great Plains. SDSU, Brookings, SD. B-566 (rev.) August 1999. Page 32.  
**Photo Credit:** Big Sioux Nursery, Inc., Watertown, USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Center and SDSU Ag Experiment Station



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