

Grasses most likely to be found at Goose Lake Prairie are listed below:

Big Bluestem (BBS)

Also known as “turkeyfoot,” Big Bluestem is a trademark of the Tall Grass Prairie, growing to heights of eight feet. It reproduces by underground stems known as rhizomes (roots on one end and flowers on the other.) “Big Blue” forms a thick, tangled sod with roots going down eight or nine feet.



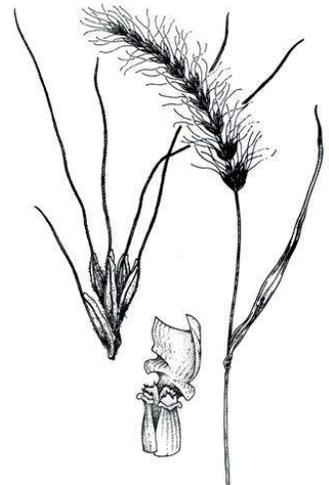
Bluejoint (BJ)

This specimen, one of the most abundant grasses at Goose Lake Prairie, is the earliest blooming grass on the prairie. It grows in clumps and will look like waves on the ocean when the wind blows.



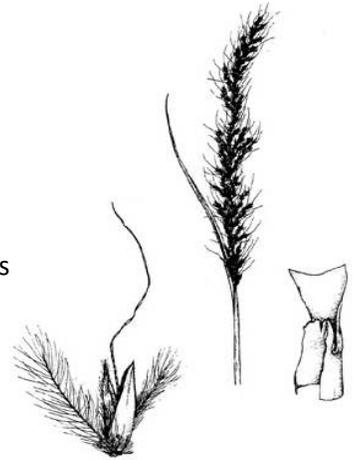
Canadian Wild Rye (CWR)

Wild Rye also called nodding wild rye, and grows to a height of between three to four feet tall. It is a cool season perennial grass that forms a light sod.



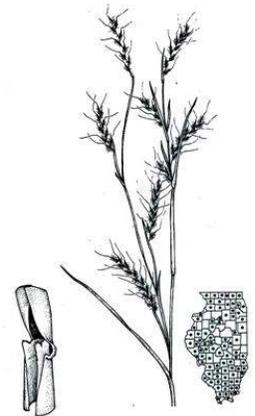
Indian Grass (IND)

This specimen, another trademark grass of the Tall Grass Prairie, also grows to heights of up to eight feet tall. This grass looks similar to “Big Blue” until it blooms. Then the seed head becomes a reddish brown tassel. It has a root system that goes down to six to eight feet.



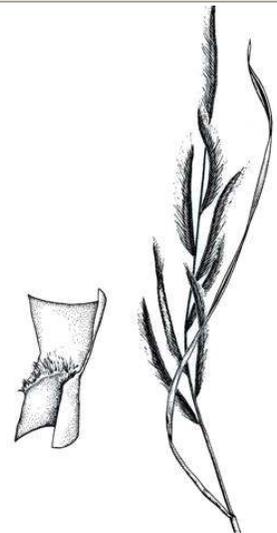
Little Bluestem (LBS)

This specimen has roots that can go down sixteen feet. It is not common at Goose Lake Prairie where the root system is limited by the wetness of the soil and bedrock. Usually it forms solitary bunches two to four feet tall.



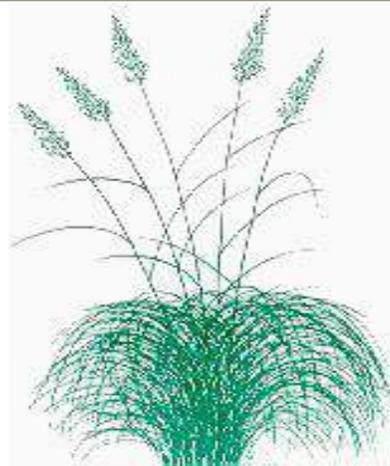
Prairie Cord Grass (PCG)

This specimen is a wet prairie grass will grow to heights of between eight and twelve feet. It earned the nickname “rip-gut” because of the tiny saw-like teeth along the edges of the grass. WITH CARE run your finger carefully down the leaf blade to feel them.



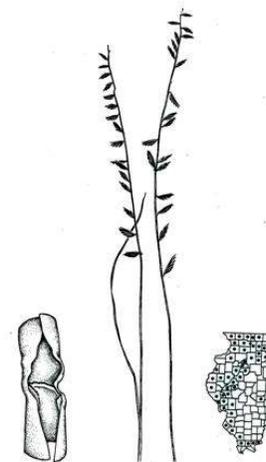
Prairie Dropseed (PDS)

This specimen, a warm season perennial bunch grass, which grows in hillocks or clumps to a height of two or four feet when extended. The grass sets corkscrew shaped seed in the fall, the seeds smell like hot buttered popcorn.



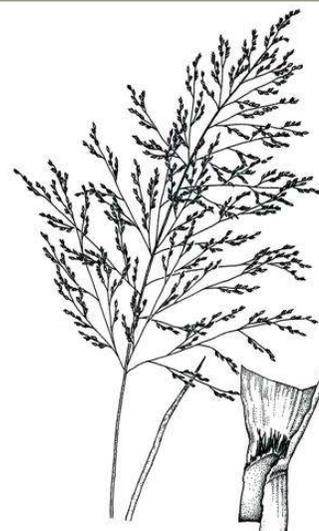
Side Oats Grama (SOG)

This specimen, whose seeds all grown on one side of the stem, and reaches a height of one and a half to three feet tall, is a warm season, perennial which starts growing in April. This grass is hard to find at Goose Lake Prairie. It has a root system that goes down five to seven feet.



Switch Grass (SG)

This specimen, a common native prairie grass, reproduces from both underground stems and seeds. It stands three to six feet tall and is winter-hardy and drought resistant. The root system goes down ten to twelve feet.



Revised by Goose Lake Prairie Partners January 2009