

## Species that Require Dormant Sowing for Successful Recruitment

While dormant sowing is highly recommended for all forb-rich mixes, it is essential for certain species that require either long periods of moist stratification or cool soil temperatures for germination. This is often the case for spring-blooming forbs, sedges, and even some grasses. In Indiana, the dormant sowing season begins in early November and lasts until the end of February.

Most spring blooming forbs are cool season species that must germinate early in the season in cool soil. Among these are Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*), Ohio Spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohioensis*), and Pale Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*). Not surprisingly, these species also require a lengthy period of moist stratification exceeding 60 days.

While sedges are less particular about soil temperatures, most *Carex* species benefit from a 30-60 day period of moist stratification. The germination requirements for sedges vary rather dramatically. Some early ripening species such as *Carex stricta* will quickly germinate when sown fresh while others will not germinate until they have had 90-plus days of cold moist stratification.

Most grasses do not require moist stratification, however Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) will only germinate in cool soil, thus requiring dormant sowing. Further, unlike many native grasses, Prairie Dropseed does not maintain seed viability in the soil from year to year, so you only have one chance for successful germination.

## Plant Feature – Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*)

This attractive grass once dominated countless acres of blacksoil prairie in the fertile soils that became the corn belt. Native populations are now largely confined to tiny prairie remnants along railroad right-of-ways and prairie cemeteries that escaped the plow. The most conservative of our major prairie grasses, Prairie Dropseed generally does not spread into disturbed areas like Indian Grass and Big Bluestem. It produces small round seeds that are nutritious for wildlife. Unlike the better known warm-season prairie grasses, the seeds germinate in early spring, so dormant sowing is essential for successful establishment. The attractive fine-textured foliage, beautiful fall color and airy scented inflorescence make Prairie Dropseed the most ornamental of our native grasses.



In the landscape, Prairie Dropseed may be established via container-grown plants as a mass planting, or mixed with other low stature prairie species. It is easily cultivated in moist or dry soils provided there is full sun. In a restoration, it should be established with associates in our [Low Stature Prairie Mix](#) in well-drained locations or our [Wet-Tolerant Low Stature Prairie Mix](#) for moist locations.