

# The Native Vegetation Advantage: An Overview

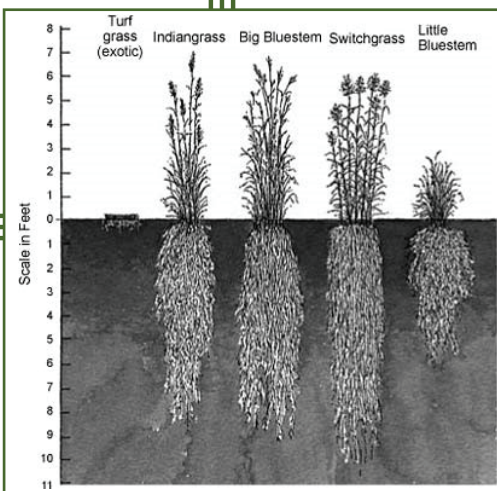
**What is Native Vegetation?** Native vegetation includes those plants that occurred within a region before settlement by Europeans. Native vegetation is well adapted to local features such as climate, soil, and water availability. Planting native plants can lessen the need for pesticides and herbicides, reduce demand for water, and increase the types and number of species in the area.

## Water Quality

The physical properties of native vegetation slow overland flow while increasing groundwater infiltration, reducing soil erosion while filtering out pollutants and fertilizers, leading to more stable, less polluted waterways.



Tom Lutgen, Star Seed



Native vegetation's extensive root systems and associated microorganisms improve **Soil Health**, increasing soil organic carbon, infiltration rates, water-holding capacity and fertility compared to row crops or introduced non-native species.

Native vegetation, particularly native grasses, sequesters more atmospheric carbon than introduced species, improving **Air Quality**. The majority of carbon in native grasses is stored underground—allowing for the removal of above ground biomass with minimal impact on stored carbon.



Jef Hodges, NBCI



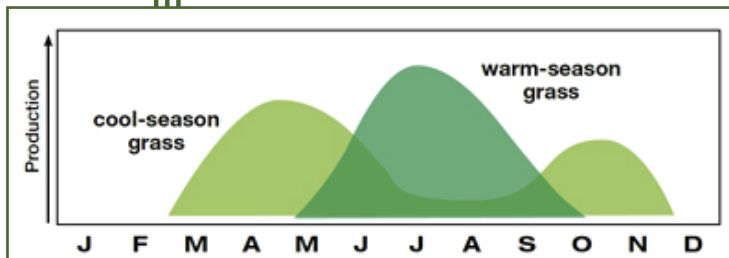
FDC Enterprises, Inc.

Native grasses are a logical choice as **Biomass** for energy production. Native grasses do not compete with food crops, there is no annual cultivation, and they out yield many biomass crops with minimal fertilizer and herbicide requirements.

Native grasses provide quality **Forage**. Native warm season grasses provide superior forage during the summer when introduced non-native cool season grasses perform at their worst, providing a significant economic gain for the producer.



Craig Harper, UTIA



Doug Osborne

Native vegetation provides superior **Wildlife** and pollinator habitat, including cover, food, and material or structure for nesting/bedding.



David Peters