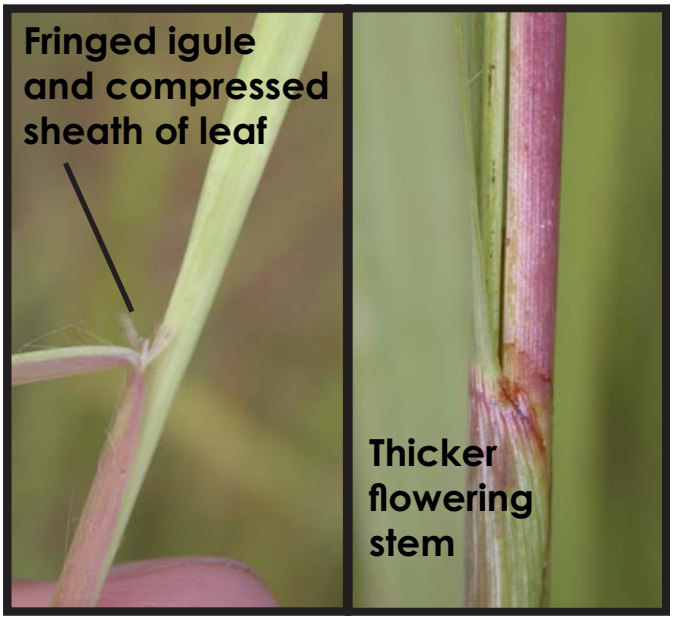
Big bluestem
Andropogon gerardii

Minnesota C-Value: 4
Wetland Indicator Status: FAC-
Native



Leaves: 5-10 mm wide, 6-24 in. long. Ligules short and membranous with a fringe of hairs on the margin that continue a short distance up the leaf blade. Leaves often red tinged towards the tip.

Stems: Stout, 3-9 ft tall. Purplish blue color late in season. Sparse hairs.

Flowers and fruit: Signature 'turkey foot' appearance from a cluster of 2-6 racemes of spikelets. Spikelets appressed to slightly spreading along racemes that are up to 6 in. long. Distinct bluish purple tint. Each spikelet has an awn that is 8-15 mm long.

Plant communities: Wet to dry prairies, sandy plains, old fields, roadsides.

Comments: Big bluestem is a native, perennial warm season species common in tall grass prairies, wet prairies, and wet meadows.