

School-to-Nature



Indian Grass

Indian Grass is a native of the North American prairies. This plant is found at King's Corner and at Trout Ponds Prairie, growing in sunny open areas where the soil is not too wet. It grows in large bunches of stalks called "tufts," and the tufts grow bigger around each year. The grass blades are blue-green and grow about 3 feet tall.

The bright golden seed stalks that form in late summer to early autumn stand up above the grass stalks, and can grow as high as 8 feet tall. The seed stalks are a shiny, metallic gold, long and slender with short side branches of seeds. They are easy to spot on a sunny day. As the seed stalks are forming, the grass blades below turn darker and can look purplish-green by autumn.

The seeds of this hardy grass feed grasshoppers and many birds including game birds such as pheasants, wild turkeys, and grouse. The grass is sweet-tasting and juicy, enjoyed by livestock, deer, and bison. Dried grass stalks are used as nesting material, and the plant provides cover for many game birds and small mammals.

Indian Grass is a plant that can spread very aggressively, and it survives both wildfires and floods. It is a true prairie native and it's a survivor.

BH / DL

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