

# Indian grass

## *Sorghastrum nutans*

### FEATURES

Indian grass is a perennial plant. In its early growth, this plant resembles big bluestem. Its leaves attach to the stem at about a 45-degree angle. A leaf is about one-half inch wide, narrowing or tapering where it joins the stem. Flowers appear yellow due to the long, yellow anthers. Small spikes of flowers are borne in pairs, one of which is sessile and contains both male and female reproductive structures. These spikelets are borne in plumelike heads. The fertile spikelets end in a bristle that is about four times as long as the fruit. The fruit is a grain. Indian grass may attain a height of four to six feet.

### BEHAVIORS

Indian grass may be found throughout Illinois. It grows in open woods, fields and moist prairies. This perennial grass begins growing about the first of May each year. Flowers are produced from August through October. This plant is an important food source for grazing animals of the prairie.

### TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Plantae  
Phylum: Magnoliophyta  
Class: Liliopsida  
Order: Cyperales  
Family: Poaceae

### ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

### ILLINOIS RANGE





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flower head

**Aquatic Habitats**

none

**Woodland Habitats**

coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

**Prairie and Edge Habitats**

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie