

-State Species Abstract-  
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

*ARISTIDA OLIGANTHA*  
PRAIRIE THREE-AWN  
Family: Poaceae

Status:

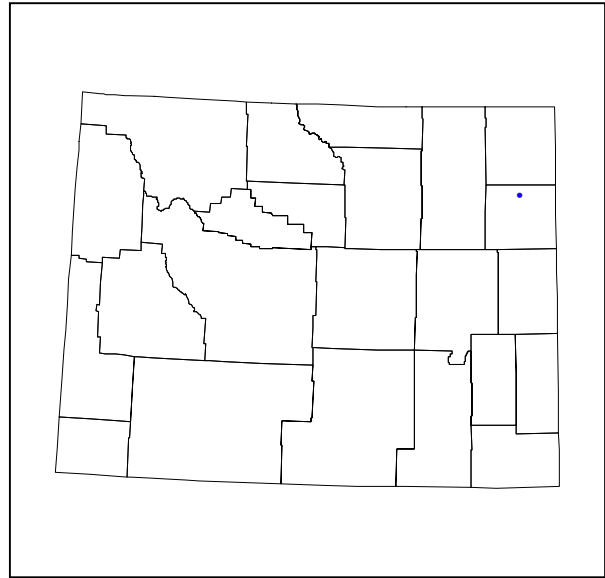
US Fish & Wildlife Service: None.  
Agency Status: None.

Heritage Rank:

Global: G5 State: S1  
WYNDD Plant List: Peripheral (Low  
Conservation Priority)

Description: Prairie three-awn is a tufted annual grass with glabrous to scabrous culms 30-70 cm tall. Leaf blades are flat to involute, 1-2 mm wide, and thinly pubescent (especially near the collar). Ligules are 0.1-0.5 mm long and short-fringed. The inflorescence is a narrow panicle 13-22 cm long with large, single-flowered spikelets arranged singly (above) or in pairs (near the base). Glumes are subequal, 12-30 mm long, and short-awned. Lemmas are 10-18 mm long and tipped by 3 diverging awns, each 25-70 mm long (with the lateral awns only slightly shorter than the central awn). Anthers are 3.5-4.5 mm, but are rarely present (Hitchcock et al. 1969; Great Plains Flora Association 1986; Hallsten et al. 1987; Gleason and Cronquist 1991).

Similar Species: *Aristida* [*basiramea* var.] *curtissii* has a first glume 5-12 mm long and the central awn of the lemma conspicuously longer than the 2 lateral awns. Other *Aristida* taxa in Wyoming are perennials. *Elymus* and *Hordeum* species have a single awn per lemma.



Wyoming distribution of *Aristida oligantha*.

Flowering/Fruiting Period: August-October.

Distribution: Occurs from Massachusetts to NE Wyoming, south to Florida and Texas, and from western Oregon south to California and Arizona. In Wyoming, known only from the southern Black Hills in Weston County.

Habitat: Reported from dry sandy areas or waste ground (Great Plains Flora Association 1986). Wyoming populations have been documented from semi-barren pine-prairie communities and roadside ditches on fine shaley soils at 4170-4280 feet.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from 2 occurrences, both last observed in 1982.

Abundance: Not known.

Range: Peripheral; in Wyoming known only from the southern Black Hills in Weston County.

Trends: Not known.

Protection status: Known populations occur on public or private lands managed for multiple use.

Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx NY.

Threats: May be threatened by grazing activity, but responses not currently known.

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Managed Areas: Occurs on Thunder Basin National Grassland.

References:

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Hallsten, G.P., Q.D. Skinner, and A.A. Beetle. 1987. Grasses of Wyoming, 3rd Ed. Research Journal 202, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Wyoming, Laramie.

Hartman, R.L., B.E. Nelson, and K.H. Dueholm. 1985. Noteworthy collections - Wyoming. Madrono 32:125-128.

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, and M. Owenbey. 1969. Pt. 1. Vascular Cryptograms, Gymnosperms, and Monocotyledons, IN: Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Owenbey, and J.W. Thompson (eds). Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest. University of Washington Publications in Biology 17(1): 1-914.

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