Our warm winter months this year have kept me busy watching our native grasses to learn more about how they respond to the warm temperatures and higher than normal fall moisture. It has been fascinating to see the variance in what has continued to grow and what has gone dormant. For the most part, our most common native grass has remained in a dormant state.

Here is a little history on this hearty grass:

Blue Grama (Bouteloua gracilis) is a very old grass species. The evidence we have available indicates that it expanded in a winter climate during the ice age, resulting in mass movement of plants and animals to the south over thousands of years. After glaciers receded following a warm and dry spell, blue grama seed made its way from the origin point on the Mexican plateau to as far north as Saskatchewan near Edmonton, Canada.

This grass species is an excellent source of protein for livestock and wildlife. It has a high-ranking protein content compared to other native grasses and is overall one of the most nutritious native grass species. Blue grama is also the most common plant in mixed prairie grasslands. It is also a great option for a low maintenance and drought tolerant lawn in our area. I hope you can take some time to get some fresh air and see if you can find this great grass species.

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