



DRYLAND GRASSES AND MISC. FORAGES

Bluegrass, Canada

This grass is used largely as a low-maintenance ground cover that can get up to 18" in moderately acidic soils. The optimal minimum rainfall requirement stands at roughly 18"/year. Seeding rate is 15-20 lbs./acre.

Bluegrass, Sandberg

Sandberg bluegrass is a perennial range grass that survives well in dry areas. Although Sandberg bluegrass grazes early, it is palatable throughout the season.

Bluegrass, Sherman Big

A perennial bunchgrass, Sherman Big Bluegrass boasts an early emergence in the spring—nearly four weeks earlier than wheatgrass. This bluegrass is used predominantly for rangeland seedings, critical areas requiring soil stabilization, cropland retirement, mine soil reclamation, upland wildlife habitat, and dryland hay. With good longevity, Sherman can reach a height anywhere between 12-24 inches. Sherman likes well-drained soils, and it should not be seeded in alkali flats or densely forested areas. Although Sherman can be seeded alone, it is more common to seed it along with other grasses—such as Basin Wildrye—forbs, and legumes. In terms of weed control, Sherman competes well with cheatgrass. Areas that receive around 11 inches of rainfall per year can yield anywhere between 700-1500 lbs./acre. In an ideal setting, irrigated production can produce nearly 2 tons per acre.

Fescue, Hard

A large form of sheep fescue, hard fescue is a medium-tall, long-lived, densely tufted bunchgrass. Hard fescue is drought tolerant and its uses include erosion control, a cover crop in irrigated orchards, soil protection on road sides, ditch banks, airports, and an effective barrier to weed invasion. Although hard fescue is adapted to a wide range of soil conditions, it will not tolerate "wet feet" or alkaline soils; however, it does well on low-fertility sites and in shaded areas. Hard fescue does tend to produce a dense mass of relatively tough leaves, which can make mowing difficult. The following planting rates are recommended: 5-7 lbs. per acre (drilling) and 10 lbs. per acre (broadcast seeding). We recommend that you plant as early in the spring as possible on drylands. Spring seed is consistently more successful than fall seeding.

Fescue, Sheep

A drought-resistant bunch grass, sheep fescue provides an excellent ground cover. Although sheep fescue is somewhat slow to establish, it is very persistent, winter-hardy grass. It is a short bunchgrass that forms dense tufts with numerous, stiff, rather sharp, bluish-green leaves, and it is adapted to a wide range of soil conditions in areas of 12 inches or more of annual precipitation. Sheep fescue performs excellently on sandy or gravelly soil and tolerates shade and moderate acidity. Sheep fescue is recommended for the following uses: erosion control, roadsides and banks, terraces or diversions, and on steep slopes planted for permanent cover. Although this dryland grass is palatable, it is not recommended for livestock grazing. Sheep fescue should be planted 8 weeks before frost in the fall and should not be planted until soil temperatures reach 55 degrees in the spring. 4-5 lbs./1,000 sq. ft., or 160-200 lbs./acre is the recommended seeding rate.

Small Burnett

A hardy, perennial evergreen forb, Small Burnett is used as wild game plant food. Small Burnett is also used on mine spoil areas. Requiring 12" rainfall and tolerant of up to 8.0 pH on well-drained soils, Small Burnett is Palatable. 1 lb. + in mixtures is recommended. "Delar" is the Idaho variety.

Crested Wheatgrass, Fairway

Fairway is a crested wheatgrass that was introduced into the U.S. from Russia in 1898. This grass is a very hardy, long-lived perennial. Moreover, Fairway is a finer-stemmed, leafier, lower-growing grass and is more uniform in growth form than the standard wheatgrass and is capable of providing a better ground cover than standard crested wheatgrass. This grass has a deep root system; however, it also sustains a weakly-rhizomatous, sod-forming root growth. Its seeds carry more and longer awns than standard crested wheatgrass. It has good seedling vigor and drought tolerance but is not adapted to poorly-drained and heavy clay soils. Fairway tends to perform best on well-drained loam soils in areas that receive 10 inches or more precipitation. This dryland grass is typically used as a form of erosion control or in revegetation areas. However, Fairway can also be used for hay or pasture, and it is easy to harvest as it holds well and can be combined. Finally, Fairway is also a good seed producer.

Crested Wheatgrass, Hycrest

This dryland wheatgrass is a hybrid combination of Nordan and Fairway and produces heavier foliage.

Crested Wheatgrass, Kirk

Kirk is a perennial bunch grass that is long lived and has an extensive fibrous root system that gives it excellent winter hardiness. Boasting a nice drought resistance, Kirk experiences rapid early-spring growth that is nicely palatable.

Crested Wheatgrass, Nordan

This grass is intended for use in pasture and range planting. Boasting a high level of drought tolerance, this cool-season grass begins growth in early spring. While Nordan does not tolerate salty soils or areas exposed to prolonged flooding, it is great for soil stabilization. With a heavy and awnless seed, Nordan has great seed production, and Nordan seed production fields will generally be productive for about five years. Seed yields typically average 800 lbs. per acre under irrigations, and 200 lbs. per acre under dryland production. When it comes to planting Nordan, deep seeding is the most common cause of stand failure. Most growers suggest a planting depth of around 1/2 inch or less in medium to fine-textured soils and 1 inch or less on coarse-textured soils. Nordan seed volumes average roughly 175,000 seeds/lb. Growers recommend that Nordan be seeded at 6-7 lbs./acre for pasture and hayland plantings.

Intermediate Wheatgrass, Oahe

This highly productive intermediate wheatgrass maintains a uniform bluish-green color. Oahe is drought tolerant, displays vigorous, rhizomatous traits, produces high seed yields, and is adapted for hay, pasture, and conservation purposes. Easily established, this dryland grass grows 2-4 feet tall and is an excellent choice to plant with alfalfa. Oahe matures an average of two weeks later than crested wheatgrass and produces an excellent quality forage in the spring and early summer. Its growth with slow during the hot, dry summer months and resumes growing in the late summer with moisture. This grass should be seeded at a rate of around 8-12 lbs./acre.

Intermediate Wheatgrass, Rush

Rush boasts superior seedling emergence and vigor. It has fantastic spring recovery and displays strong rhizomatous traits. Rush's uniform seed heads, wide leaves, and high forage and seed production make it an excellent choice. Of all the intermediate wheatgrasses, Rush produces the largest seed—averaging 66,000 seeds per pound. It is adapted for soil erosion control and roadside and mine-spoil stabilization. Rush is good for hayland and pastureland—both irrigated and dry and is capable of producing excellent forage for livestock and wildlife. However, it is NOT adapted to hay mixtures with alfalfa.

Tall Wheatgrass, Alkar

A perennial, cool-season, coarse grass, Alkar is late-maturing and grows 3-7 feet tall. It is particularly tolerant of saline, or alkali, soils. It is adapted to either irrigated or sub-irrigation. Although Alkar boasts some drought tolerance, it prefers a high water table and is often used in wildlife plantings. Its tall and persistent bunch growth provides nesting sites and cover for upland game birds. A planting rate of 12-15 lbs./acre is recommended. It is also recommended that Alkar be planted in spring or fall when temperatures are cooler.

Wheatgrass, Critana Thickspike

With a fibrous root system and good seeding vigor, Critana is a drought-tolerant wheatgrass that is ideal for reclamation and soil stabilization purposes. Critana doesn't do well when planted with other introduced grass, but it performs nicely planted alongside slower-developing natives. This wheatgrass is cold tolerant, moderately shade tolerant, and very fire tolerant. Although Critana is considered a relatively low forage producer, it is palatable to all classes of livestock and wildlife—it greens up early and heads out early. In medium to coarse-textured soils, Critana grows to a height between 12"-24". The minimum annual rainfall requirement rests at around 10"/year. Critana has approximately 154,000 seeds in a pound, and the seeding rate stands at around 12 lbs./acre or 2 lbs./1,000 sq. ft.

Wheatgrass, Pubescent

This wheatgrass is similar to intermediate wheatgrasses in most respects, but is distinguishable by the pubescence—short, stiff hairs on the heads and seeds. Pubescent is more drought tolerant and more winter hardy than intermediate wheatgrasses. This dryland grass can be useful for hay and pastures. The stand-out feature of Pubescent is its ability to maintain a vibrant green color into the summer months if exposed to enough soil moisture. It is a long-lived, sod-forming grass and is able to better spread by rhizomes than intermediate wheatgrasses. Pubescent produces stems that can reach a height of 3-4 feet and produces seed heads that are 4-8 inches long. Pubescent and intermediate wheat seeds are often found together in a mixture, and the two species readily cross pollinate. However, Pubescent is better adapted to low-fertility soils and low-rainfall areas. This wheatgrass has some tolerance to saline soils. It also grows well under irrigations, but its yields are not equal to intermediate wheatgrass under these conditions.

Wheatgrass, Secar Bluebunch

A densely tufted wheatgrass, Secar is drought tolerant, early maturing, and persistent under adverse conditions. This grass is primarily used for rangeland seeding, critical area stabilization, cropland retirement, mine-spoil reclamation, and upland wildlife habitat. Secar can get as tall as 16-32 inches. Secar's longevity is 30+ years, and there are roughly 139,000 seeds per pound. Secar is adapted to low-rainfall areas and performs best in deep, well-drained soils. It should not be seeded in saline lowlands, wet meadows, or densely forested areas. Legumes can be grown along with Secar. When it comes to weed control, cheatgrass will out compete Secar. Cheatgrass must be controlled before Secar is seeded. This grass should not be grown in areas that experience heavy spring-summer grazing.

Wheatgrass, Siberian

Siberian Wheatgrass is often used in grazing, rangeland, hayland, erosion control and land reclamation, and forage production. This grass is palatable to livestock and wildlife. Moreover, Siberian Wheatgrass is a desirable feed in spring and in the fall if it regrows enough. Siberian is capable of withstanding heavy grazing and is extremely drought tolerant. Known for rate of establishment, stand resistance, and total forage yield on more arid sites, this grass has been seeded in areas with as little as five inches of precipitation. This wheatgrass does well in shallow-to-deep, moderately-course-to-fine-textured, weakly acidic to moderately alkaline soils. It is tolerant of the cold, and its planting time is usually either early spring or late fall. Siberian boasts good seedling vigor and is a long-lived, cool-season grass. It grows 1 to 3 feet tall.

Wheatgrass, Slender

This particular variety of wheatgrass is often referred to as "western rye grass." It boast high alkali tolerance, but is less drought resistant than crested wheatgrasses. Slender wheatgrass is palatable to cows and horses. It produces vigorous seedlings but is not long lived enough to plant in mixes. This grass grows in tall bunches up to 1' in diameter.

Wheatgrass, Western

This grass is a native, cool-season, perennial, sod-forming grass, which produces firm underground stems and seeds. Western wheatgrass begins growth in the early fall, remains green until winter and achieves max growth in the spring. This dryland grass goes dormant in mid-summer. It can stand closer grazing than taller natives—should be grazed during early growing stage and cut for hay at the late-bloom stage.

Wildrye, Basin

Basin Wildrye is a native, perennial bunchgrass that is often times used as a more drought-tolerant alternative to Small Burnett. It can be seeded for pasture in wet-summer, dry-winter climates (Basin prefers 8-16" of rainfall). It tends to provide later fall palatability than crested. While Basin Wildrye can be harder to establish due to seedling vigor, it becomes a great soil stabilizer once established. This dryland grass is common on wet alkali soils in the west and with a good moisture year can reach a height capable of providing winter feed above snow.

Wildrye, Russian

A long-lived perennial bunchgrass, Russian Wildrye is recognized as one of the most versatile forage grasses used for dryland pastures. This grass is nicely adapted to silt loam and to heavy clay soils and is exceptionally cold and drought tolerant. Although Russian Wildrye is not well-suited to hay production, it is long-lived and stays green longer into the summer than crested wheatgrass. It is very palatable and is capable of curing later in the growing season with good protein levels. Russian Wildrye is tolerant of grazing and provides quick regrowth. Its primary uses are as follows: erosion control/reclamation, very competitive with weeds once established, very good tolerance to salinity, and good feed for wildlife.

Sainfoin

Sainfoin is often used as a substitute for alfalfa in dryland areas that receive over 13" of rainfall. This legume is resistant to alfalfa weevil and is non-bloating.

Saltlander

Saltlander is a perennial, hybrid green wheatgrass. It has good longevity and is utilized in semi-arid production areas. Saltlander boasts a higher salt tolerance than any of our other pasture or dryland grasses. This grass performs well in 10"+ rainfall areas and is used primarily for pasturing, dryland hay, or wildlife habitat.