

WHEATGRASS, PUBESCENT: A cool-season bunchgrass that is closely related to intermediate wheatgrass, but longer lived. Seed heads are short-hairy, or pubescent. Better than intermediate on drier, low-fertility sites. Salt tolerance is similar to that of intermediate wheatgrass.

Use for Hay: Responds to irrigation but not as well as its cousin, intermediate wheatgrass. Seed with a legume for increased quality.

Use for Pasture: Nutritional grass grazed by all livestock classes. Can graze two weeks earlier than native grasses and can continue well into summer.

Planting Rate: 10-12 lbs. pure live seed per acre

Varieties: 'Luna': the commonly used variety of choice, 'Common' usually has too much pubescence, which cuts palatability.

WHEATGRASS, TALL: A tall, cool-season bunchgrass which originated in Eurasia. It is slow to establish and is late-maturing. Stems grow 2 to 5 feet tall. Adapted to saline sites and those where temporary up to five weeks spring flooding occurs. Withstands 25 percent more salts in soils than pubescent wheatgrass. Will experience a 50% decline in yield on soils with an electrical conductivity of 18 to 19 mmhos/cm.

Use for Hay: Makes fair hay quality because of coarse leaves, however, quantity is large. Cut before or at early heading when it can be higher in digestible protein and total digestible nutrients than other wheatgrasses.

Use for Pasture: Provides an extraordinarily long grazing period. Keep grazed down to maintain best palatability, but not below a 6" stubble height. Old coarse growth can prevent grazing of current growth.

Planting Rate: 8-10 pounds pure live seed per acre

Varieties: 'Jose': New Mexico release; earlier maturing; improved palatability, 'Largo': Utah release, 'Alkar': Washington release; late maturing, 'Argentina', 'Platte': Cheyenne, Wyoming release.

WHEATGRASS, THICKSPIKE: A mid-height, cool-season, native sod-former which is adapted to sandy and silty sites. Closely related to western wheatgrass, but forage production is lower. It has good seedling vigor and emergence. Graze from spring to early fall. Withstands trampling. Tends to become wiry with maturity.

Planting Rate: 6-8 pounds pure live seed per acre

Varieties: 'Critana': excellent seedling vigor.

WHEATGRASS, WESTERN: A cool-season, native sod-former which grows one to two feet tall. Leaves grow 4 to 12 inches long. It is adapted to

dryland silty to clayey sites where it is often found with blue grama. Withstands flooding and silting in lowland sites. It requires two years of growth before hardy top growth seen. Combines well with bunchgrasses by filling in bare spaces.

Use for Hay: A common hay grass in drainages in the eastern plains. Hay quality is good. Cut in the very early bloom stage for best quality.

Use for Pasture: Can be grazed from early spring to fall. Or let cure and graze in winter. Despite stiff leaves, it rarely becomes coarse enough to prevent sheep from grazing. Manage for two- to three-inch stubble; four to six inches if grazed continuously.

Planting Rate: 10 pounds pure live seed per acre

Varieties: 'Arriba': originated from Arriba, Colorado, 'Barton': Kansas release.

WILDRYE, RUSSIAN: A cool-season dryland bunchgrass which originated in northern Asia. Grows one to three feet high with many basal leaves 6 to 18 inches long. Has high digestibility and exceptionally long season of use. Very drought tolerant but difficult to establish on lighter soils. Adapted to 8 inches or more of annual moisture, once established. Begins growth two weeks later than crested, but has better fall regrowth and summer availability, if soil moisture is available. Russian wildrye will survive on salty soils up to an electrical conductivity of 18 mmhos/cm.

Performs better when seeded in 16- to 21-inch row spacing. Interseeded legumes work well, but such a mixed pasture must be managed well due to the high palatability of the legume/grass.

Use for Hay: Poor because of basal leaves that are largely unharvestable.

Use for Pasture: An excellent dryland pasture grass which is palatable to all livestock. Tolerates close grazing better than most grasses. Regrows quickly. A good strategy is to graze it lightly in the spring, saving growth for late summer and fall when other grasses are not available. Manage for a 4-inch stubble height; 6- to 8-inches if grazed continuously.

Planting Rate: 8-10 pounds pure live seed per acre

Varieties: 'Bozoisky-Select': a 1985 release; significantly more vigorous establisher than 'Vinall'. Will establish from deeper seeding depth than 'Vinall' and 'Swift', 'Mankota': a 1992 release out of North Dakota; greater yield than 'Vinall'; seed emerges from 2.5-inch depth, 'Vinall': 1960 release from Dakotas, 'Swift', 'Sawki'