



# Dryland Grasses for Sandy Soils in Western Colorado

Information provided in part by [Dennis Gorsett, USDA - NRCS, Grand Junction, Colorado office](#)

## Selecting the species:

Grass Species	Growth Habit	Seeding Rate <sup>1</sup>
<p><b>Blue grama - <i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>(HBK) Lag. ex Steud.</b>            A long-lived native perennial grass. It is low growing, up to 18 inches, with small leaves, not over 6 inches long and 0.125 inch or less in width. Found on all soil types, but thrives best on upland, rather heavy soils. Drought resistant. Growth is late starting in spring. It is relished as pasture by all classes of livestock. One of the more important range grass species, standing heavy grazing well. It is readily established by seeding.</p>	Sod former	1.5 lbs of seed/acre
<p><b>Galleta grass - <i>Hilaria jamesii</i> (Torr.) Benth.</b>            The bases of the stems are rhizome like. Stems may reach to 2 feet, with small, narrow leaves. Found under arid conditions and highly drought resistant. Moderately palatable while succulent, but not when dry.</p>	Sod former	2 lbs of cleaned seed/acre or 6 lbs of noncleaned seed/acre
<p><b>Indian Ricegrass - <i>Oryzopsis hymenoides</i> (Roem. and Schult.)</b>            A native bunchgrass from the Dakotas south to Texas and west to the Pacific Ocean. It is drought-resistant, adapted to dry, sandy soils. It grows in dense clumps, up to 2 feet tall. Leaves are slender and nearly as long as the stems and highly palatable to livestock.</p>	Bunch grass	6 lbs of seed/acre
<p><b>Sand Dropseed - <i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i> (Torr.) A. Gray</b>            A tufted, native bunchgrass from Idaho and Oregon southward. Most prevalent on sandy soil. Plants are 2 to 3 feet tall, with solid stems and rather numerous leaves up to 12 inches long and 0.25 inch wide. Roots are coarse and deep-penetrating.</p>	Bunch grass	0.3 lbs of seed/acre

<p><b>Ephraim Crested Wheatgrass - <i>Agropyron cristatum`Ephraim`</i></b>          Is a tetraploid cultivar developed by the <a href="#">USDA/ARS</a> Northern Great Plains Research Center at Mandan, North Dakota from plants in an old seeding at Dickinson, North Dakota. Source - Ankara, Turkey. Adapted to a wide range of soils, including disturbed areas and mine spoils. Salt and alkali tolerance is moderately high.</p>	<p>Introduced - sod-forming</p>	<p>3 lbs/acre</p>
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1. Rates shown are to be used when seed is drilled. If seed is broadcast or if the site is a critical area, seeding rates should be doubled. When mixing reduce the seed accordingly, i.e. if using all 4 species, use 1/4 of the seed recommended above.

**Seeding:**

Seeding should be preceded by working the soil with a disc, harrow, rototiller or rake. Light raking or harrowing following broadcast seeding is recommended or a thin layer of soil or fiber mulch should be broadcast over the seed.

**Seeding Dates:**

For irrigated areas - approximately Aug 20, November 1 or April 1

For non irrigated areas - approximately November 1 to take advantage of winter moisture

**Mulch:**

Apply 4000 pounds of grass hay per acre after seeding.

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