



Dryland Grasses for Clay 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 ¹
<p>Galleta Grass - <i>Hilaria jamesii</i> (Torr.) Benth.</p> <p>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>	Native - sod-forming	2 lbs of clean or 6 lbs of floret seed/acre
<p>Alkali Sacaton - <i>Sporobolus airoides</i> (Torr.) Torr.</p> <p>Alkali sacaton is native from South Dakota to Washington and south into Mexico. It is densely-tufted, long-lived, with erect, solid stems about 3 feet tall. Basal foliage is abundant, the leaves to 18 inches in length and 0.25 inch wide. Roots are fibrous and deep-penetrating. The grass will grow on moist, alkaline soils, hence the name, but occurs on other soil types as well. It is palatable while succulent but becomes tough and unpalatable when ripe.</p>	Native - bunchgrass	0.5 lbs/acre
<p>Western Wheatgrass - <i>Agropyron smithii</i> Rydb.</p> <p>A perennial native to most parts of the United States except the humid southeast. Plant growth reaches 2 to 3 feet. Leaves to 12 inches in length and 0.25 inch wide; rather stiff and erect. Thrives best on rather heavy soil, but is adapted to a wide range of soil types, including alkaline soil. Used as pasture and cut for hay. Spreads from underground rhizomes to form dense sods. Very feed and erosion control.</p>	Native - sod-forming	8 lbs/acre
<p>Bluebunch Wheatgrass - <i>Agropyron spicatum</i> (Pursh) Scribn. and Smith</p> <p>Plant growth is vigorous and may reach a height of 4 feet with leaves 10 inches long and 0.5 inch wide, flat and drooping. Leaves remain green throughout the summer and are palatable even when</p>	Native - bunchgrass	9.5 lbs/acre

dry. Beardless Bluebunch wheatgrass (<i>A. spicatum</i> f. <i>inermis</i> (Scribn. & Smith) Beetle) lacks the awns , making the plants more palatable in late stages of growth.		
Ephraim Crested Wheatgrass - <i>Agropyron cristatum</i> `Ephraim' Is a tetraploid cultivar developed by the USDA/ARS 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.	Introduced - sod-forming	3 lbs/acre

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.

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.