

USING GRASSES IN REVEGETATION

BENEFITS OF GRASSES

- Fibrous root systems are excellent for erosion control
- Can be used as filter and buffer strips to improve water quality
- Excellent forage as hay or pasture
- Great wildlife habitat

GOALS FOR YOUR LAND

- Grazing? Season of use, animal needs
- Haying? Nutrient value, high yield
- Conservation? Erosion control, water quality
- Seed production? Nutrient requirements can be critical

CRITICAL FACTORS FOR GRASS SEEDING

- Adapted species and variety. I recommend named varieties.
- Seedbed prep and planting depth
- Weed control!!!!
- Timing of seeding
- A little rain always helps

PROBLEM AREAS

- Sodic or saline soils: Best controlled by proper water management , drainage, and picking adapted varieties. Some amendments are available such as Gypsum and sulfur.
- Controlling weeds: Mowing in a timely fashion and height. Other physical control methods such as pulling and tilling. Use knowledge of weed growth habits to select an optimum planting date.

TYPES OF GRASSES

- Cool Season Grasses: Greenup early and can usually maintain growth throughout the growing season if irrigated. Require more water than warm season grasses but typically produce higher yields in our area. Orchard grass and Meadow brome
- Warm Season Grasses: Require warmer temperatures before greenup. Very drought tolerant. Used as ornamentals in our area. Switch grass, blue gramma, buffalo grass.

- Bunch grasses: Tend to produce vigorous tillers and erect plants. Tend to result in clumpy patches especially in dryland situations. Examples: Bluestems, orchard grass, tall fescue
- Rhizomatous grasses: Capable of spreading vegetatively from the roots. Tend to form dense sods that are excellent for controlling erosion and in use in filter strips and buffers. Also good for filling in in areas where establishment is difficult. Examples: Western wheatgrass, smooth brome, meadow foxtail.

WHICH GRASS DO I PICK?

- Know the amount and quality of water you have available. Is it irrigated or dryland.
<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/>
- Get to know your soil. I.E. texture, depth, salinity.
<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>
- If there is any doubt get a soils test!!!!
- Is it for forage or for environmental benefits .
- Warm or cool season grasses

- Wildlife Habitat
- Find a Service Center
- States and Regions
- Centers and Institutes

Plant Materials Technical Resources by Topic

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Publications by TopicPublications by Plant Materials CenterConservation Fact Sheets and DocumentsConservation Plant ReleasesConservation Plant Releases Photo GalleryBiofuels and Carbon SequestrationChesapeake BayConservation BuffersCoastal and ShorelineCritical AreasCroplandDrought ToleranceEstablishment - GeneralGeneral Reference & Misc.Invasive SpeciesLegumes for Resource Conservation ProgramsMine ReclamationNative Species IssuesNews and Related Features | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nutrient ManagementPasture and HaylandPlant Identification Tools and GuidesPlants for PollinatorsRange and Rangeland ManagementRecreation AreasRelated Web SitesRiparian and BioengineeringSaline and Salt-Affected SitesSeed and Plant ProductionSeeding and PlantingTechnical ReferencesThreatened, Endangered, and Rare SpeciesUrban ConservationWetlandsWetland and Floodplain Restoration - Plant MaterialsWildfire Protection and RestorationWindbreaks and ShelterbeltsWildlife Habitat Protection and RestorationWoodland and Forestland |
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Related NRCS Resources

- [Great American Plants](#)
- [Backyard Pond](#)

Information For

- [Communities](#)
- [Farmers](#)

DRYLAND GRASS SEEDINGS

- Should typically only consider perennial species seeded during the dormant period
- Usually do not need fertilized in our area especially during establishment.
- Some species include: Siberian wheatgrass, Russian wildrye, Sand dropseed, Crested wheatgrass, Slender wheatgrass, Alkali sacaton, Thickspike wheatgrass, Pubescent wheatgrass, Western wheatgrass

IRRIGATED PASTURES

- May respond to some fertilizer inputs even in the establishment year. However careful planning is required especially when manuring.
- Flexible seeding dates.
- Some species include: Orchard grass, Timothy, Meadow Brome, Tall Fescue, Perennial rye, Meadow foxtail.

TO MIX OR NOT TO MIX

- Mixtures can be beneficial in establishing a complete canopy across the field
- Can require less inputs if legumes are included
- Can provide a more balanced forage during the growing season.
- Less susceptible to plant diseases
- More difficult to manage fertilizer inputs
- Can cause problems when grazing or haying
- Can develop a monoculture over time.

QUESTIONS

