

Hardiness

USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 3-5 (January 1990), at elevations of 2000-7000 feet.

Seed Production

Propagation of blue wildrye is by seed. White Pass Germplasm needs to be drill seeded into a clean seedbed using a minimum of 20 seeds per linear foot. Seeding should take place in the spring for dryland plantings. Irrigated plantings can be seeded in the spring and early fall. Seed is typically ripe by late-July. Harvest will require swathing and combining.

Availability

White Pass Germplasm is a Selected Class release. The USDA Pullman Plant Materials Center will maintain Breeder seed until 2035. Foundation Seed will be maintained and distributed by the WSCIA. There will be no registered seed class. Certified Seed class will be recognized.

For More Information

Visit our Plant Materials Web site at <http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/> to find more information on solving conservation problems using plants.

USDA NRCS

Pullman Plant Materials Center
P.O. Box 646211
Pullman WA 99164-6211
Phone: (509) 335-6892
Fax: (509) 335-2940

Or

WSCIA Foundation Seed Program

P.O. Box 646420
Pullman WA 99164-6420
Phone: (509) 335-4365

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July 2010



'White Pass' Germplasm Blue Wildrye



**A quality conservation plant
developed by the USDA NRCS
Pullman Plant Materials Center,
Pullman, Washington**

Helping People Help the Land

‘White Pass’ Blue Wildrye

‘White Pass’ Blue Wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*) is a native early seral grass that typically does not persist much more than 5 years. It responds to disturbances and is frequently abundant on cutover areas, burns, and road shoulders. Blue wildrye does not interfere with tree regeneration. It is palatable and many ungulates utilize it during the summer months.

Uses

The primary use of White Pass blue wildrye is critical area stabilization plantings such as vegetating abandoned forest roads. It is also useful for upland wildlife habitat plantings.

Description

White Pass blue wildrye attains a height of 36-52 inches. The stems are stiff, upright, and smooth. The auricles are purple and non-clasping. The seed heads are 4-7 inches long and crimson in color. Each seed has a ½ - ¾ inch straight awn. There are approximately 134,000 seeds per pound. The leaves are wide, drooping, and smooth.

Adaptation

Blue wildrye is found in prairies, foothills, and mountains of several western states and Canadian provinces. It occurs in much of Washington except for those areas that receive less than 14-inches of annual precipitation.

Blue wildrye can be found near sea level and above timberline. It grows on well-drained deep soils to skeletal rocky soils. It commonly occurs in conifer-forested areas of the west and tolerates partial shading. White Pass blue wildrye is a mid-to high-elevation ecotype and best adapted to the east slope of the Cascade Range and adjacent foothills.

Establishment

Blue wildrye is short-lived so it needs to be seeded in a mix with longer-lived species such as bluebunch wheatgrass and/or Idaho fescue. A mix should use no more than 50% blue wildrye.

Blue wildrye mixtures are seeded in the spring. Drills should be calibrated to place the seed no more than ½ inch deep. Each drill row should apply 10-15 blue wildrye seeds per foot of row. The same row should have 15-30 seeds of the longer-lived species.

The seedbed needs to be firm under the seed. Broadcast seedings need to apply 5-7 pounds per acre seed. Broadcast seedings may need to be rolled after seeding in order to improve seed-to-soil contact.

Maintenance

Blue wildrye emerges rapidly and makes most of its growth before the onset of summer drought.

- Weeds need to be controlled during the establishment year.
- Blue wildrye needs to be protected from livestock grazing during the establishment year.
- Upland bird habitat plantings must not be mowed during the nesting season.
- Burning decadent growth is not recommended at this time, it is not known if this will adversely affect stand survival.

