

Seed Availability

Foundation seed of Sherman is available through the Washington State Crop Improvement Association. Seed growers interested in producing Certified Sherman seed need to apply for Foundation seed through the Washington State Crop Improvement Association. They also need to apply with the Washington State Department of Agriculture which will determine if the field meets isolation distance requirements and previous crop requirements. Certified seed is available through many private seed companies. Breeder seed is maintained by the Pullman Plant Materials Center.



Sherman is normally swathed before combine harvesting at the Pullman Plant Materials Center.

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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August 2010



'Sherman' Big Bluegrass



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

Helping People Help the Land

'Sherman' Big Bluegrass

'Sherman' Big Bluegrass (*Poa-secunda*, formerly, *P.-ampla*) is a selection that originates from seed collected from a native range site in Sherman County, Oregon in 1932 by D.E. Stephens, Superintendent of the Sherman Branch Experiment Station. Sherman big bluegrass is a long-lived, perennial bunchgrass. It has distinct blue, moderately abundant leaves and a large, compact seed head. Sherman begins growth early in the spring, as much as 4 weeks earlier than crested wheatgrass.

Uses

The primary uses of Sherman big bluegrass include:

- Rangeland seedings
- Critical area stabilization
- Cropland retirement
- Mine soil reclamation
- Upland wildlife habitat
- Dryland hay

Description

Sherman big bluegrass attains a height of 12-24 inches stem of 12-24 inches in length. The stems are fine and smooth. The leaves are basal and vary between 8-14 inches long. The length of a seed is just 3/16th of an inch and no awns are present. There are approximately 926,000 seeds per pound. The longevity of the

grass is 30+ years. Recruitment from shattered seed is very good. Ease of establishment is moderate.

Adaptation

Big bluegrass naturally occurs on upland sites, open ponderosa pine and lodgepole pine forests. Sherman is best adapted to areas that receive 9-20 inches of annual rainfall. However, it has been successfully used in the lower Columbia Basin where winters are mild and receive as little as 6 inches of annual rainfall. It performs best on well-drained soils. It should not be seeded to alkali flats or densely forested areas. Sherman tolerates moderately acidic soil conditions and is one of the better performing plants for reclaiming hard rock mine spoils. Sherman performed better than 177 other accessions of big bluegrass in the early selection trials. It performs better than 'Service' big bluegrass in the inland Pacific Northwest. Service is a cultivar that originates from Alaska. It has dominated a multi-species test planting at the Lind Dryland Experiment Station. It recruits readily from shattered seed so stands may improve over time. Late summer fires have had little adverse impact on Sherman in CRP burn studies conducted in central Washington.

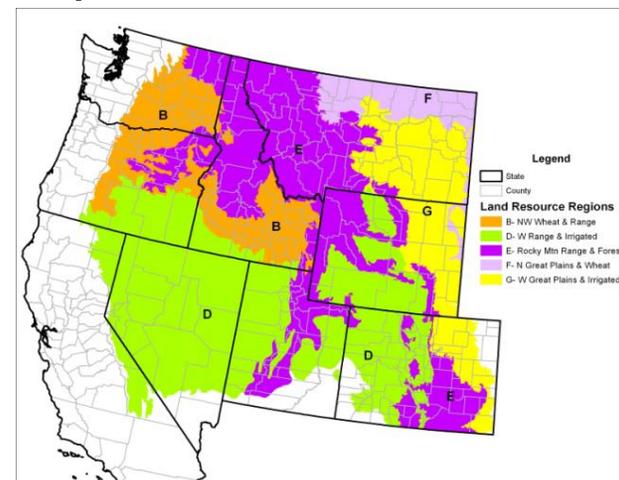
Establishment

Sherman can be seeded alone but is more commonly seeded with other grasses such as Idaho fescue, bluebunch wheatgrass, Snake

River wheatgrass, and basin wildrye. It also can be sown with forbs and legumes.

Cheatgrass is the most troublesome weed during establishment of Sherman. Once established, Sherman competes well with cheatgrass. Annual broadleaf weeds such as prickly lettuce and Russian thistle are less of a problem during the establishment of Sherman. Perennial broadleaf weeds such as Canadian thistle and leafy spurge must be controlled because they will severely impact Sherman. Biomass (forage) production of Sherman varies with rainfall and irrigation. Sites that receive 11 inches of annual rainfall will yield 700-1,500 pounds per acre. Irrigated production can be as high as 2 tons per acre.

Proposed Use Areas



Sherman grows well throughout most of the western states. The shaded areas are the primary areas for its intended use.