

# after the fire

## SEEDING A CEREAL GRAIN ALONG WITH STRAW MULCH

**On properties where homes or other structures were destroyed  
and/or where debris clearance is to take place over the winter**

**Seeding:** Broadcast common Barley grass seed as soon as possible and before the end of December on disturbed soil areas following debris clearance. If necessary, lightly grade/rake/smooth surface soil to make sure that rain water is not able to concentrate or be diverted by equipment tracks left on the site. Barley is a non-reseeding, cold season, fast germinating cereal grain. To ensure better germination success remove any ash layer then rake seed into the upper inch of soil. Cover seeded area with 2" of straw mulch (rice straw in urban/wildland interface areas only. Use rice, barley or wheat straw if in an urban setting on areas that later will be covered with a home, buildings, driveways, etc.) to protect the soil until the grass cover is established. Refer to fact sheet on straw mulching and note below for more details. Note: Most other grass seed, such as erosion control mixes or native perennials will have difficulty growing fast or even germinating this late in the season.

**Straw Mulching:** Broadcast rice, barley, wheat or native grass straw mulch on other bare or disturbed soil areas especially on steeper slopes outside of building envelope to provide protection to the soil, slow runoff and trap sediment. Do not apply straw any deeper than 2 inches because it will slow/prevent seed germination and/or slow natural regeneration of resident native seed already in the soil. Apply loose rice or weed-free straw in any other erosion hazard areas as needed after rainfall/runoff events. Make sure that no straw ends up in drainage ditches or waterways. To help secure it in place you can "punch/tuck" it into the soil using a shovel, hoe or spade a few inches about every 4 feet.

*Note: Use only rice straw or certified weed free cereal grain straw if home site/property is adjacent to a wildland or other natural area. Straw may need to be held in place with the use of Jute or plastic netting on steep slopes where "hand punching/tucking" is not feasible or ineffective. Do not apply more than 2" of straw over the seedbed otherwise the grass may not grow through. If debris clearance occurs after the first of the year then apply straw at a rate of 2-4" in depth over the entire exposed soil area without seed. Rice straw has little or no weed seed in it and seems to be the straw of choice however it is more difficult to spread. It's also lighter than barley or wheat straw and may be displaced by wind more easily.*

**Straw Wattles/Fiber Rolls:** One or more fiber roll/straw wattles may be needed on the contour of sloping properties below house site and a second one above neighboring property, roads or streets, and/or drainage courses/streams to slow runoff and trap sediment/debris. Make sure that wattle is "keyed in" in to soil 3-4 inches and securely staked (max. 4' spacing) so that runoff does not by pass the wattle or allow water to go under the wattle. Refer to fact sheet on fiber rolls/wattles for details.

**Home Site Drainage Systems:** Make sure to make repairs, replace and clean all drains, inlets, outlets, rock lined ditches, etc. on the property and maintain after each storm event.

**Home Site Fire Damaged Vegetation:** Do not cut down any trees or make any major soil/slope disturbances until spring or summer unless they pose an immediate danger. Let's give nature a chance to do her magic. Trees and other vegetation that may appear to be destroyed may in fact survive given the benefit of the doubt.

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