

IDAHO FESCUE

Festuca idahoensis



ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Native to Intermountain West and inland Pacific Northwest areas. Found from Washington and Montana south to central California and Colorado. Cool-season bunchgrass of small to medium size. Few upright culms 1 to 3' tall. Numerous fine, rough, blue green basal leaves with narrow, inrolled leafblades. Small panicle seed head, 2 to 5" tall.

GROWTH HABITS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

Thrives on deep, fertile, silty and clayey soils. Less productive on lighter, rockier, and shallower soils. Tolerant of weakly saline, alkaline, and acid soils. Growth starts in March or April,

matures in mid to late summer, varying regionally and altitudinally, then becomes semi-dormant until fall moisture. Not tolerant of flooding, high water tables, or inundation for any extended period. Grows in well-drained meadows, sub-humid grasslands, and semi-desert sagebrush sites. Thrives in over 15 to 18" ppt. Moderately drought tolerant. Grows between extremes of 800' in the Columbia River Basin and 12,000' elevation in Colorado. Damaged by sagebrush grassland fires. Mature plants and stands strongly competitive.

CULTURE

Plant seed 1/4 - 1/2" deep on coarse textured soils and 1/4" or shallower on fine-textured soils. Better stands obtained on firm seedbed. Drill seeding rate is 2 to 3.5 lbs. PLS per acre for satisfactory stands on rangelands. Increase rate 50-100% for harsh sites and when broadcasting. Seedling vigor fair. Stands may develop second or third year. Seed directly in standing stubble or mulch on steep slopes and highly erosive sites. Seed early spring at lower altitudes with reliable moisture. Seed late fall with uncertain moisture and at lower elevations or as early as possible at higher elevations. Control weeds and withhold grazing during seedling year.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Used for range seedings, mined lands, and good fall forage in mountainous areas. Medium palatability to livestock. Good palatability to elk yearlong and deer in spring. Moderate grazing tolerance but can be injured by early spring grazing. Apply rest-rotation-grazing system to improve stands.

IMPROVED VARIETIES

'Trident' released from International Seeds Inc. Oregon.

'Nez Perce' released from Idaho.

'Joseph' released from Idaho.



Pawnee Buttes Seed Inc.

PawneeButtesSeed.com 1-800-782-5947