

# BIG BLUEGRASS

*Poa secunda*



## ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Native to the Intermountain West, Medium-sized, basal-leaved, cool season Bunchgrass. Culms 2 to 4' tall, green to blue-green, smooth, basal leaves 8 - 16" long. Leaf blades narrow, folded, elongated with boat-shaped tips. Inflorescence a narrow, elongated panicle, up to 8" long. Sometimes with short rhizomes, but typically densely tufted. Strong fibrous root system but immature plants and seedlings easily uprooted.

## GROWTH HABIT AND ENVIRONMENT PREFERENCE

Thrives on moderately coarse sandy to fine clayey soils, tolerant of weakly alkaline and acid soils. Weak tolerance to early spring flood-

ing and poor drainage. Thrives in 15 to 20" ppt. but nearly equal performance in better moisture sites of 12 to 15" ppt. Moderate drought tolerance compared to cool season species. Excellent cold tolerance of local ecotypes. Growth very early in spring, earlier than crested wheatgrass; matures in early summer with moisture exhaustion or later in summer with abundant moisture at higher elevations.

It occurs from foothill to subalpine elevations. Moderate shade and grazing tolerance. Intolerant of dry season wildfires.

## CULTURE

Drill seed about 1/4-1/2" inch deep for medium-textured soils with average moisture conditions or slightly deeper on coarser and drier soils. Cover broadcast seed very shallow. Drill 1 to 3 lbs. PLS per acre. Seed in early spring before most favorable conditions for rapid germination and seedling growth; late fall, or as early as possible in summer for higher mountain.

Seedling vigor is moderate. Stands may be ready for grazing by the second fall with moderately good moisture conditions. Seedlings and immature plants are easily pulled up by grazing. Usually grazing must be withheld for two growing seasons to avoid stand losses from "pull-up".

## USE AND MANAGEMENT

Used for hay and early spring forage for livestock. Good palatability to livestock, elk and deer spring and fall; also good forage in summer at higher elevations. Seed alone or in mixtures with alfalfa and sometimes with other species for pasture and hay both dryland and irrigated. New seedings require weed control during first season.

## IMPROVED VARIETIES

'Sherman' released from Oregon.

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