

BLUEBUNCH WHEATGRASS

Pseudoroegneria spicata ssp. *spicata*



ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Native of primary importance in Intermountain region. Extensive in western Montana to central Washington and south into Nevada and Utah. Cool-season, long-lived, perennial bunchgrass. Variable ecotypes. Culms erect, 1.5 to 4' tall, from medium sized tufts. Leaves primarily basal, narrow, flat, or loosely inrolled blades up to 8" long. Inflorescence a spike 3 to 8" long.

GROWTH HABITS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

Optimum native stands occur on silty soils.

Fairly common on sandy and clayey soils and even on thin, rocky, and gravelly soils. Tolerant of weakly saline soils. Native stands occur in the 8 to 35" ppt. zone. Considered better adapted for seeding in the 10 to 20" ppt. Intolerant of high water-tables, poor drainage, and early spring flooding. Drought resistance better, greater root and forage production on drier sites than crested wheatgrasses. Good winter hardiness but variation among local strains and ecotypes. Elevation range from 500 to 10,000' in the intermountain West.

CULTURE

Drill seed 1/4 – 3/4" deep on loamy, clayey, and sandy soils. Cover broadcasted seed shallow. Drill seeding rates 5 to 10 lbs. PLS per acre. Fifty - 100 % more seed for broadcasting on harsh (south or west) facing sites. Seed late fall or in early spring. Also possible to seed in August and September in areas with good fall moisture or on summer fallowed fields. Shows some promise for revegetating mine spoils. New seedings require weed control and protection from grazing, usually two growing seasons or until plants headed and firmly rooted.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Uses include seeding abandoned croplands, depleted ranges, and bare or disturbed lands. Moderately good palatability to livestock and wildlife, somewhat reduced during late summer dormancy. Moderate tolerance to grazing except in early spring. Makes moderate volume of regrowth in fall depending on moisture supply.

IMPROVED VARIETIES

'Goldar' released from Idaho and Utah.

'Secar' released from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming.

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