

# CRESTED WHEATGRASS

*Agropyron cristatum*



## ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Introduced from Siberia via Canada. Cool season perennial bunchgrass. Deep, finely branched, fibrous root system. Seedheads ("crested wheatgrass complex") distinctly different from other wheatgrasses. Stalks 1 to 3' tall with numerous green to dark green, mostly basal leaves. Inflorescence short, dense crest-shaped spike, 1 1/2 to 3" long.

## GROWTH HABITS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

Starts growth early in spring. Matures in early to mid-summer, and becomes semi-dormant until cooler or damper weather. Makes fairly good regrowth in fall with adequate moisture. Thrives on moderately deep and semi-fertile loam soils in cool semi-arid areas. Good drought tolerance and winter hardiness. Adapted to weakly-acidic and moderately-saline soils.

Adapted to 9 to 15" ppt. areas but used in less arid sites with proper management. Altitudes usually 5,000 up to 9,000' in Arizona and New Mexico and similar areas of other states. Adapted to northern Great Plains.

## CULTURE

Seed in firm seed bed 1/4 - 3/4" depth on loams and up to 1" on coarser drier soil. Cover broadcasted seed lightly. Mulching may be beneficial on steep slopes. Seed 3.5 - 8 lbs. PLS per acre on semi-arid land. Plant 50 - 100% more seed for broadcast or mine spoils reclamation and stabilization. Denser seeding usually provides faster cover. Time of planting varies with locality. Seed in fall or early spring, 2 to 4 weeks before most favorable soil moisture and temperature are likely to occur.

## USE AND MANAGEMENT

Used for pasture and hay and also for wildlife food and cover, as well as stabilization of roadsides, utility lines, industrial sites and mine reclamation. Weed control needed on new seedings. Herbicides are more effective than mowing. Stands are more efficiently managed if fenced separately from native range lands. Spring and fall grazing complements summer use of Great Plains grasslands giving rest during critical growth-cycle periods. Medium palatability when green but less after seeding heads.

Some low growing varieties can be used for low maintenance turf.

## IMPROVED VARIETIES

- 'Ephraim' released from Utah.
- 'Hycrest' released from Utah.
- 'Ruff' released from Nebraska.
- 'Nordan' released from North Dakota.
- 'Parkway' released in Canada.
- 'Douglas' released from Utah.
- 'CD-II' released from Utah.
- 'Roadcrest' released from Utah.
- 'Fairway'.
- 'Standard'.



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