

SIBERIAN WHEATGRASS

Agropyron fragila ssp. *sibiricum*



ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Introduced from USSR as a forage range grass in western U.S. Cool season, long lived, perennial bunchgrass. Stems blue green. Deep, finely branched, fibrous root system. Seedheads distinctly different to other perennial wheat grasses except those of “crested wheatgrass complex.” Stalks 1 to 3’ tall. Numerous blue-green mostly stem leaves, lax, finer than crested. Inflorescence long narrow flat 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 12” ppt. areas but used in less arid sites with proper management. Altitudes usually 5,000 up to 9,000’. Needs spring moisture. Adapted to northern Great Plains and western U.S.

CULTURE

Seed in firm seed bed 1/4 - 3/4” depth and up to 1” on coarser drier soil. Cover broadcasted seed lightly and mulching may be beneficial on steep slopes. Seed 4.5 to 9.5 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. Plant in fall or spring when 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. Good for stabilization of roadsides, utility lines, and mine reclamation. Stands are more efficiently managed if separated from native rangelands. Spring and fall grazing complements. Summer use of Great Plains grassland giving rest during critical growth-cycle periods. Medium to good palatability when green; less so after heading. Remains green 10 to 15 days longer than crested wheatgrass.

IMPROVED VARIETIES

‘P-27’ released from Idaho and Washington.

‘Vavilor’ released from Utah.

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