

CANADA WILDRYE

Elymus canadensis



ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Native, stemmy, short-lived, cool season, perennial bunchgrass. Robust, forming clumps with erect culms 2 to 4' tall with broad, rough basal and stem leaves having large auricles. Tufted with shallow, coarse, fibrous roots but not strongly competitive. Nodding coarse spikes with awned spikelets. Secondary species in midwestern prairies reacts as a decreaser. More commonly found in disturbed sites and roadsides. Grows in western Great Plains, Rocky Mountains, Intermountain West and eastern U.S.

GROWTH HABITS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

Adapted to silty and clayey soils. Various ecotypes tolerant of strongly saline and moderate sodic soils. Adapted to below 10" to over 20" ppt. Optimal in overflow and subirrigated sites. Tolerant of poor soil drainage, short-term winter flooding and water table intermittently in top foot of soil.

CULTURE

Similar culture to tall wheatgrass. Seed at 1" depth and drill 5 to 10 lbs. PLS per acre. Seed late fall or as early as possible in spring for mountain sites. Very strong seedling vigor, forming stands first year, reaching peak production second and third year then starts thinning. Often seeded in mixtures.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Sometimes used as rapid cover and site stabilizer in seeding mixtures. Is better to seed in alternate rows with other species. Can be used potentially as a replacement for cereal grains now seeded in some plantings with long-lived perennial mixtures for wildlife and soil stabilization.

Species seeded on subirrigated and flooded sites. Good for standing winter feed and cover. Potentially useful for soil stabilization, disturbed soils and mine lands. Excellent upland game bird cover and useful as fence row plantings and field and stream filters.

IMPROVED VARIETIES

'Lavaca' released from Texas.

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