

Intermediate Wheatgrass

Intermediate Wheatgrass is an introduced perennial grass native to Europe and Asia. It is a long-lived, cool season grass with short rhizomes and a deep feeding root system, and is used for hay and pasture in the northern Great Plains on well-drained loamy to clayey textured soils. It produces good hay yields, both individually and with alfalfa, where the stiff stems keep alfalfa from lodging. Intermediate Wheatgrass has fairly slow re-growth following cutting and is best adapted to single crop haying systems. It is able to tolerate droughty conditions with low or no irrigation, as long as about 12 inches of total annual moisture is available. It provides excellent Spring, early Summer and Fall pasture, and is palatable to all classes of livestock and wildlife. Intermediate Wheatgrass is well adapted to stabilization of disturbed soils and can be used in critical and urban areas where irrigation water is limited and to stabilize banks, dikes and roadsides. It can also be used to build soils because of its heavy root production. Strips of this grass provide good nesting cover for game birds and migratory waterfowl. Seedling vigor is good and new stands can provide good weed suppression. Light frequent irrigations are beneficial for stand establishment. It establishes rapidly under favorable conditions but is not considered an invasive species as it does not spread from the original planting site. It can coexist with native plants and adds additional biodiversity in mixed situations. The best dryland results are obtained from seeding in very early Spring. Irrigated lands can be seeded through the Summer, with Fall seedings possible with good irrigation or rainfall. Forage production can be restored and stands may benefit from ripping if it becomes sodbound. Care should be taken to avoid excessive tillage because stands may be damaged. Oahe Intermediate Wheatgrass was developed by South Dakota AES in 1961. Its name is an abbreviation for the Sioux word meaning "Big House". It was selected for uniform bluish-green color, drought tolerance, vigor, rhizomatous traits and high seed yields, and is well adapted for hay, pasture and conservation purposes.