



Crested Wheatgrass

CRESTED WHEATGRASS (*Agropyron desertorum*; *Agropyron cristatum*) is a cool-season perennial wheatgrass that was introduced into the Great Plains from eastern Europe and Asia in 1898. **Crested Wheatgrass** is a bunchgrass that grows to a medium height (3 feet) and possesses a deep, extensive root system. Best growth occurs on soils that are moderately coarse to medium in texture with a minimum depth of ten inches.

FACTS ABOUT CRESTED WHEATGRASS:

- Because of its root system and early growth Crested Wheatgrass is quite drought tolerant.
- Crested wheatgrass is completely winter hardy throughout the Plains States.
- It is best adapted to heavier soils of good fertility.
- Crested Wheatgrass starts growth in the early spring ahead of any other native or introduced grass.
- It becomes dormant during summer months, but growth resumes when moisture is sufficient.
- The forage from Crested Wheatgrass is well liked by livestock during early growth.
- Crested Wheatgrass may be planted using an ordinary grain drill.



AGROPYRON CRISTATUM VARIETIES:

EPHRAIM was selected for its ability to produce rhizomes and is a sodforming grass rather than bunchgrass. It is particularly well adapted to arid areas, and is salt and alkali tolerant.

FAIRWAY starts growth at about the same time in the spring as other varieties but will cure earlier and produces less vegetative growth. It is used extensively for erosion control on embankments, burms and rights-of-way.

RUFF produces excellent sod due to its ability to self seed and form broad-bunch plants. It is recommended for areas of low rainfall.

AGROPYRON DESERTORUM VARIETIES:

NOROAN is a variety that excels other strains in early spring growth and is best adapted to dryland pastures.

AGROPYRON DESERTORUM / AGROPYRON CRISTATUM CROSS:

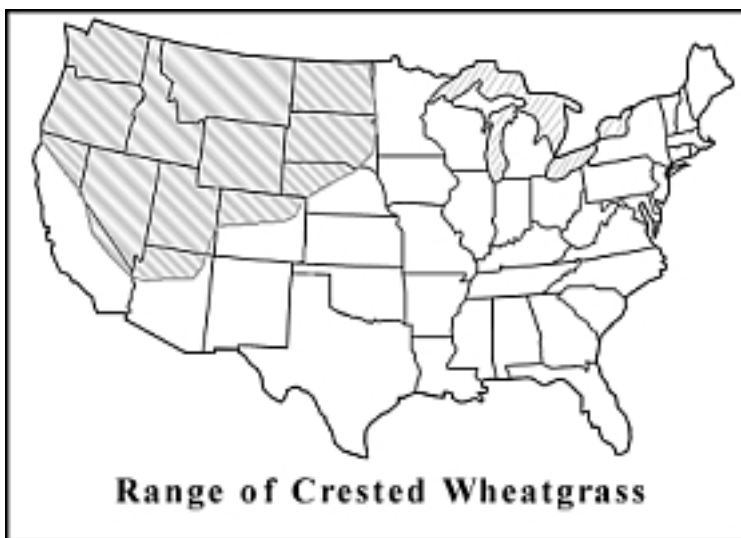
HYCREST is a larger more robust plant, is an improved cultivar which is an interspecific cross of *Agropyron desertorum* and *Agropyron cristatum*. It produces about 20% more seed than other cultivars and well adapted to the sagebrush and juniper vegetation sites. It is also grown in association with greasewood, shad-scale, and Indian Ricegrass where annual precipitation is less than 8 inches.

ESTABLISHMENT / MANAGEMENT

As in the seeding of most grasses, a clean firm weed-tree seedbed is essential to good establishment. Fallowed seedbeds have been most successful, followed by those disced or plowed in the spring prior to seed formation of wheatgrass or other dominant Species. Late tall seedings have been the most successful in areas receiving less than 12 inches of annual precipitation. Spring seedings have been successful in areas of higher precipitation and on soils that crust or frost-heave. Drill seeds at a rate of 5107 pounds per acre, or 10 to 12 pounds per acre if the seed is broadcast. Broadcast seedings fail however, unless the seed is worked into the soil by harrowing, etc. Seed should be planted at a depth of one-half inch.

Do not graze new seedings until plants are established well enough to withstand pulling by livestock. Full establishment may require 2 or more grazing seasons, depending on soil moisture, and seedbed conditions. Control weeds by mowing, cultivation, or spraying. The use of a herbicide should be avoided until plants have 4 to 6 leaves and from the plant booting stage until after seed harvest. Apply nitrogen as required by a soil test. Always leave a 6 inch stubble after mowing or grazing.

A rotation-deferred grazing system is often effective in maintaining adequate amounts of forage. Crested Wheatgrass is adapted in areas where annual precipitation averages 8 inches or more and where the growing season is less than 120 days.



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