

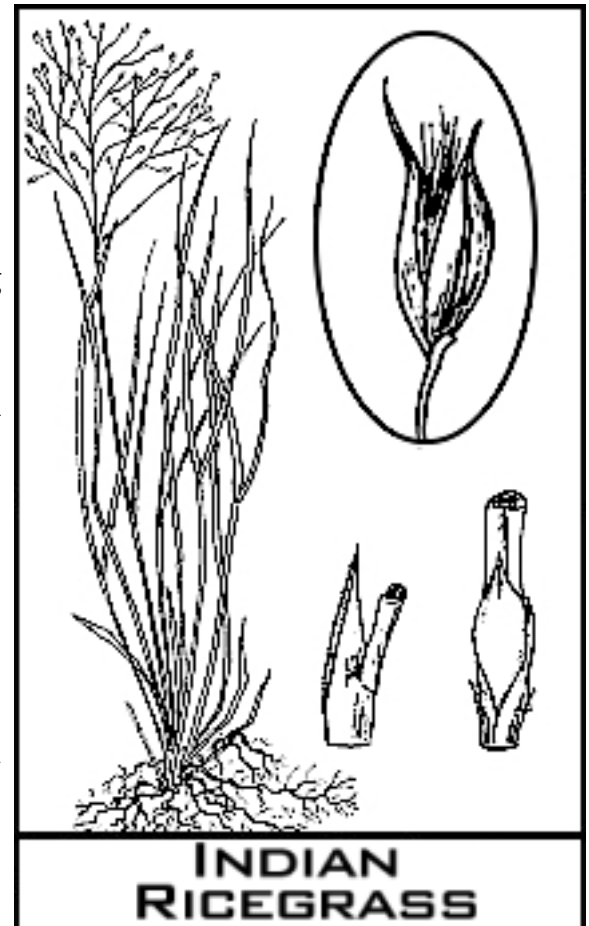


## Indian Ricegrass

**INDIAN RICEGRASS (*Oryzopsis hymenoides*)** is a perennial, native, cool-season grass. It occurs naturally on coarse-textured soils in arid and semiarid climates throughout the Intermountain Zone of the West. It is most abundant where there is little competition from other perennials. Indian Ricegrass is hard seeded. The seed coat prolongs dormancy which may last for many years. Growth begins in early spring but stands tend to be short-lived (3 to 4 years). It is a very drought tolerant grass and is often a pioneer species on disturbed sites and sandy soils. Indian Ricegrass is also called Sandgrass, Indian Mountain Rice, Indian Millet, Sandrice or Silkygrass. The nutritious seed was a staple food of the Indians, thus giving it the common name Indian Ricegrass.

### FACTS ABOUT INDIAN RICEGRASS:

- **Indian Ricegrass is not tolerant of poorly drained soils or high watertables.**
- **A good stand of Indian Ricegrass on sandy land will control wind erosion.**
- **Indian Ricegrass is an excellent forage, both as standing winter hay and for early spring grazing.**
- **It can tolerate fire when dormant; it does not tolerate shade.**
- **Seed of Indian Ricegrass is relished by livestock and rodents because it is high in protein and fat.**
- **Birds favor the seed because it shatters easily and falls to the ground; with the high fat content, the seeds can sustain life of upland birds during the critical feeding periods of winter.**
- **This species is one of the most drought enduring of the native grasses.**
- **Indian Ricegrass does tolerate weakly saline or alkaline soils but does better on neutral soils.**
- **Its primary use has been for winter and early spring forage for sheep.**



## VARIETIES:

**Nezpar(P-2575)** a variety named in honor of the Nez Perce Indians of Idaho, is found from high mountain, dry southerly exposures to desert floors. Nezpar was chosen for release by the Soil Conservation Service because of its lower number of hard seed, thus shortening its dormancy.

**Peloma** was originally collected from native stands found growing above 5000 feet elevation on medium textured soil. Paloma was selected for establishment, forage, seed yields, and stand longevity. Paloma has good regrowth and spring recovery. It is resistant to root rot damage.

## ESTABLISHMENT / MANAGEMENT

Indian Ricegrass should be drilled 2 1/2 to 4 inches deep. Seed at the rate of 8 to 10 lbs/acre in drill rows spaced 12 to 14 inches apart. A deeper planting depth puts the seed in contact with moist soils which aids the scarification process and makes the seed less likely to be dug up by rodents. Recommended seeding rates are 5 to 7 pounds PLS/acre in the fall prior to snowfall (October or November) 50 germination will not occur until the following spring. Winter freezing and thawing benefits germination. Rangeland seedings should be drilled at a rate of 20 to 25 PLS per square foot. Indian Ricegrass can be seeded into a non-volunteering stubble crop.

Delayed germination and seed dormancy have hindered domestication. Acid-bleaching or storage of seed for 4 to 6 years can greatly improve germination. After planting, two years should be allowed for adequate germination and stand establishment. Care should be taken to use seed from local ecotypes or cultivars with known adaptations. Seed harvest may be difficult due to uneven maturation within the panicle.

Indian Ricegrass benefits from livestock use if it is moderately grazed in the winter and early spring. Livestock should be removed while there is still enough moisture to allow recovery, growth and production of seed.



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