



## Tall Fescue

### ORIGIN:

**TALL FESCUE, KY-31** was established from original plants found in Kentucky. Originally introduced from Europe, it adapted itself to soil conditions of the Kentucky region, and has since gained importance because of its ability to adapt to a wide variety of other types of soils, including poorly drained areas.

### DESCRIPTION:

Tall Fescue, Ky-31 is a cool season, aggressive, perennial bunchgrass which grows to a height of three to four feet. This plant has short creeping rootstocks which develop into a uniform, thick sod. It is robust, rather coarse and long-lived. Tall Fescue Ky-31 has dark green leaves with a spreading seed head.

### ADAPTATIONS AND USE:

Tall Fescue is widely adapted to subhumid climatic conditions and to irrigated areas. It has however, a fibrous root system that reaches a depth of five feet which makes good use of sub-soil moisture. Tall Fescue adapts well to poorly drained soils that are either acid or alkaline. It produces more on the sandstone-shale based soils than other cool season grasses.

Tall Fescue is one of the more drought-resistant plants of the cool season group, and will maintain itself under rather limited fertility.

Tall Fescue has two features that make it useful in soil conservation work: it produces a large amount of coarse, tough roots, and it makes a good ground cover. The roots improve soil structure and prevent erosion. It can be used as a cover crop in areas where the shade is not too dense. The principal use of Tall Fescue is pasture for beef and dairy cattle. Grazing capacity of Tall Fescue pastures is high on fertile soils when moisture is available, but palatability and nutritive value are lower than they are for other commonly used pasture grasses. It can be cut for hay if properly managed and is a good, but coarse lawn grass.



## **ESTABLISHMENT / MANAGEMENT**

Tall Fescue Ky-31 requires a moist, weed-free, firm seedbed. Fescue grown along with legumes can minimize the problems sometimes associated with pure fescue stands. Soil testing should be done to determine what minerals or fertilizers might be needed. To get the best results from fescue, it should be clipped after seed harvest is completed. Fescue will withstand closer grazing and more abuse than most cool-season grasses, but it can be overgrazed to the point that vigor and production of the next season is reduced. Use of rotation grazing has proven successful, by allowing the plants a period of regrowth after heavy grazing.



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