

'Arctared' Red Fescue

Festuca rubra

Uses: Erosion Control, Soil Stabilization, Turf
Throughout Alaska

Background Information

Red fescue is an aggressive grass. It is found throughout Alaska in meadows, slopes, and boundary areas.



Growth

Festuca rubra has long rhizomes which enables it to compete with weeds and stabilize banks.

Festuca rubra is a sod forming grass. Its leaves are bright green, wiry, and narrow. Its longevity is about 10 years.

In Alaska, 'Arctared' red fescue can survive frequent mowing or clipping. This is due in part to its creeping growth form.

Cultivar: 'Arctared'

Plant Introduction Number 562642

'Arctared' is a cultivar developed by the University of Alaska Agricultural Experiment Station and the United States Department of Agriculture. It was named and released to seed growers in 1965.

'Arctared' red fescue traces its beginnings from a single plant collection in 1957 in the Matanuska Valley, Palmer, Alaska. This fescue shows dependable winter survival. It has rapid seed germination and excellent seedling vigor.

'Arctared' forms turf adapted to a wide range of conditions. It tolerates flooding and foot traffic. It forms sod and can be closely clipped (Hodgson, et.al. 1978).

This species is very winter hardy.

Red fescue is a colonizer of disturbed areas. It provides long-term stabilization as well. It needs little maintenance, establishes quickly, and survives for many years.



Map from Hultén, 1968.
Used with the permission of Stanford University Press.

Distribution

Festuca rubra is native to Alaska and can be found in moist or sandy areas. (Hultén, 1968).

'Arctared' red fescue is recognized in breeder, foundation, and certified seed classes.

Breeder and foundation seed is maintained by the Alaska Plant Materials Center.

Certified seed is available through the Alaska Seed Growers, Inc.

Interesting Note:

Festuca rubra is a grass which can grow in many different environments. There are over 200 cultivars of *Festuca rubra* throughout the world.

In most of Alaska, the cultivar which performs best is 'Arctared'. In many tests it survived winters which eliminated introduced cultivars.

Alaska Plant Materials Center

Serving Alaska's needs in production of Alaska native plants

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'Arctared' Red Fescue

'Arctared' Red Fescue for Alaska Revegetation Purposes

Throughout the State of Alaska, 'Arctared' is used for revegetating mines and highways. It is also used for lawns and golf courses. It will survive in sun and shade; in cold and hot; in dry and moist; and in a broad range of pH.



Festuca rubra seed
~245,185 seeds per pound

In most seed mixes for Alaska soils, specifications call for 'Arctared' to be 20 to 25 percent per mixture (DOT, 2001). It does tend to become dominant and may inhibit natural re-invasion of wild plants.



To Produce 'Arctared' Red Fescue

'Arctared' is produced with traditional farm equipment. New seedlings have rapid seed germination and excellent seedling vigor.

Control of weeds and irrigation enable good field performance. Seeds are fully mature and ready for harvest in early September.

'Arctared' grows best on medium textured soils. It is tolerant of temperatures as low as -43 degrees F. It is also tolerant of fire (USDA, NRCS, 2004).

Peggy Hunt & Stoney Wright
State of Alaska
Department of Natural Resources
Division of Agriculture
Plant Materials Center
5310 S. Bodenbug Spur Rd.
Palmer, AK 99645-9706
Phone: (907) 745-4469



'Arctared' in field production at the
Plant Materials Center, Palmer, AK.

'Arctared' plant characteristics

Wetness Tolerance	fair
Acidity Tolerance	good
Seedling Vigor	very good
Yield Potential	moderate
Longevity	long
Seed Production	moderate
Drought Resistance	good
Winter Hardiness	high
Root System	sod
Palatability	fair

References

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