Background Information

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

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.

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.

Distribution

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

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).

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*
‘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.

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).

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References


