

Henderson Ridge Germplasm red fescue

Festuca rubra

Selected Class Release “Natural”

Uses: Revegetation

Coastal and Southcentral Alaska



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.

Festuca rubra may out-compete other native grasses due to its tenacious attributes.



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).

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.

Red fescue can survive frequent mowing or clipping. This is due in part to its creeping growth form.

Henderson Ridge Germplasm red fescue seed is maintained by the Alaska Plant Materials Center for commercial production.

Henderson Ridge Germplasm red fescue

Plant Identification Number: 9097728

Henderson Ridge Germplasm red fescue was collected on the Island of Attu in the Aleutians, Alaska, in 1993 by Stoney Wright (Wright, 2005).

This native grass is a Selected Class Release by the Alaska Plant Materials Center (PMC). This means it has been grown and harvested at the PMC and continues to preserve its excellent performance.

This grass is recommended for use in revegetation because its seedlings are vigorous and provide good initial plant cover.

Henderson Ridge is tolerant of many kinds of sites. Fast growing from seed, it merits inclusion in revegetation seed mixes.

Henderson Ridge Germplasm red fescue 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).

Alaska Plant Materials Center

Serving Alaska's needs in production of Alaska native plants

July 17, 2007



Henderson Ridge Germplasm red fescue

Henderson Ridge Germplasm red fescue for Alaska Revegetation Purposes

In coastal and southcentral Alaska, Henderson Ridge Germplasm can be used for revegetating mines and highways, as well as other similar sites. It can be used for lawns and golf courses. It will tolerate direct sun and shade; in cold and/or 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' red fescue to be 20 to 25 percent per mixture (DOT, 2001). In coastal revegetation projects, Henderson Ridge Germplasm can be substituted for 'Arctared' and will probably grow better since it is originally from the Aleutians.



To Produce Henderson Ridge Germplasm red fescue

Conventional farm equipment is needed. New seedlings have rapid seed germination and excellent seedling vigor.

Cultural practices of control of weeds and regular irrigation enable good field performance. Seeds are fully mature and ready for harvest in early September.

Henderson Ridge Germplasm 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).



Henderson Ridge Germplasm red fescue in field production at the Plant Materials Center, Palmer, AK.

Henderson Ridge Germplasm red fescue 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
Palatability	fair

References

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