Slana Germplasm tufted wheatgrass
_Elymus macrourus_ (Agropyron macrourum)
Selected Class Release “Natural”

**Uses:** Revegetation
Interior Alaska

**Background and Growth**
_Elymus macrourus_ is native to Alaska. It is found on open slopes, gravel or sand bars, and earth embankments in tundra and woodlands (Hultén, 1968).

Tufted wheatgrass is usually found on well-drained soils. It is a long-lived perennial.

It reproduces by seed or (rarely) vegetatively via rhizomes. It is self-fertile (Sullivan, 1993).

This grass grows in clumps to about 3 feet tall. Its leaf blades are narrow and mostly green, but occasionally bluegreen. It has a slender 8 inch seed spike that some growers consider to be attractive.

**Slana Germplasm tufted wheatgrass**
Plant Identification Number: 9097726

Slana Germplasm tufted wheatgrass comes from Slana, near Glennallen Alaska (August 1995). It was collected at an elevation of approximately 2400 feet by Stoney Wright (2006).

The seed from the parent (Slana) plant is grown and harvested at the Plant Materials Center and by other seed growers.

Some agencies require the original seed to be collected within a certain circumference around where the revegetation will take place.

An example of this is at Denali National Park. They use a locally collected seed mix of a native legume, Indian Potato (_Hedysarum alpinum_), and wheatgrass (_Elymus macrourus_). By planting both species at the same time, Densmore (2000) states that the resulting product can withstand mowing and light scraping—as well as resist invasive weeds.

This same method is practical throughout Alaska where the seed source material is not so strictly regulated.

Roadsides which are well-drained, nutrient-poor, sandy, or gravelly could be successfully established in about 5 years with a mix of _Elymus macrourus_ and _Hedysarum alpinum_.

**Wheatgrass in the Wild**—
- is considered a colonizer and an indicator of disturbed sites (Tsvelev, 1983);
- is drought-tolerant, long-lived, and forms sod;
- can be found on riverbanks subject to fluctuating erosion;
- plays an important part in natural revegetation as a nurse plant for other species.

**Alaska Plant Materials Center**
_Serving Alaska’s needs in production of Alaska native plants_
To Produce Slana

Slana Germplasm tufted wheatgrass grows better in fine-textured soils. Drill it about 1/2 inch deep.

Light irrigation will help its growth. Keep weeds controlled. Seeding can begin either in early spring or fall.

Tufted Wheatgrass has an approximately 8 inch seed head, making it easy to harvest with normal farm devices. Its seed spike ripens in late summer, thus it is one of the last grasses harvested.

Slana Germplasm tufted wheatgrass for Alaska Revegetation Purposes

This wheatgrass can be an important part of seed mixes for revegetation. It is quick to germinate and become established. This enables it to act like a nurse plant for slower growing plant species (Sullivan, 1993).

Slana Germplasm tufted wheatgrass is well suited to revegetate roadsides where the soil is dry. Wildlife and domestic animals eat this grass.

Elymus macrourus seed
170,174 seeds per pound

Elymus macrourus production field at the Plant Materials Center in Palmer, Alaska.

Slana Germplasm tufted wheatgrass plant characteristics

- Wetness Tolerance: moderate
- Acidity Tolerance: moderate
- Seedling Vigor: good
- Yield Potential: high
- Longevity: long
- Seed Production: moderate
- Drought Resistance: good
- Winter Hardiness: moderate
- Palatability: fair

(Sullivan, 1993)

References


Peggy Hunt & Stoney Wright
State of Alaska
Department of Natural Resources
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